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על משקוף המגדל



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שמעון יוסף יצחק דב בן ברוך

Yasher Koach to Rabbi Aryeh Sklar for his tremendous efforts in much of the editing

Table of Contents

"מפתחות למגדל"

<i>Introduction</i> ~ Rabbi Dr. Dvir Ginsberg	3
<i>The Four Kosot</i> ~ Ariel Ganopolksy	5
<i>Kadesh</i> ~ Yaakov Neustatder	7
<i>U'Rechatz: What Happened To The Bracha?</i> ~ Rabbi Chaim Ozer Chait	10
<i>The Seder Plate: Fantastic Beasts & When to Eat Them</i> ~ Noam Narrowe	12
<i>Yachatz</i> ~ Rabbi Ashi Harrow	14
<i>Ha Lachma</i> ~ Anya Koby Klugman Desmond	16
<i>Ma Nishanah</i> ~ Joe Gladstein	18
<i>Avadim Hayinu</i> ~ Mordechai Levoitz	19
<i>The Seder: A Discussion Or An Experience?</i> ~ Ezra Klein	21
<i>R' Elazar Ben Azarya: A Timeless Tale</i> ~ David Ross	23
<i>Zechirat Mitzrayim Kol Yom</i> ~ Rabbi Meir Sharabi	25
<i>Arba Banim: Everyone According To Their Level</i> ~ Aryeh Zucker	28
<i>Yachol MeRosh Chodesh: The Haggadah's Hava Amina</i> ~ Ezra Landman-Feigelson	29
<i>Mitechila Ovedai Avodah Zarah Hayu</i> ~ Yaakov Farrell	31
<i>Baruch Shomer Havtachato: The Brit For All Generations</i> ~ Moshe Chernigoff	33
<i>Vehi SheAmda</i> ~ Aharon Dardik	34
<i>Vayotzianu: Is the Haggadah Really About Leaving Egypt?</i> ~ Josh Weichbrod	36
<i>Dam V'Aish V'timrot Ashan</i> ~ Sammy Tisser	42
<i>God's Omnipotence</i> ~ Eli Witty	44
<i>Midah Keneged Midah: The Makkot in Poetic Midah</i> ~ Simon Pinter	46
<i>R' Yosi, R' Eliezer, R' Akiva</i> ~ Yonatan Beer	48
<i>Hakarat Hatov In "Our" Dayeinu</i> ~ Shlomo Korobkin	50
<i>The Simanim and Dayeinu</i> ~ Zach Kleiman	52
<i>Making The Mitzvot Meaningful</i> ~ Rabbi Aryeh Sklar	55
<i>Hallel</i> ~ Reuben Azose	58
<i>Birchat Maggid: A Unique Category Of Blessing</i> ~ Rabbi Dr. Dvir Ginsberg	60
<i>The Duality Of Matzah</i> ~ Dovi Deutsch	63
<i>Gebroktz and Korech: Minhag and Meaning</i> ~ Eli Orenbuch	65
<i>Shulchan Orech</i> ~ Rabbi Shmuel Dovid Chait	67
<i>Birkat HaMazon: Mitzvah For Everyday & The Seder</i> ~ Rabbi Jonathan Ziring	69
<i>Shefoch</i> ~ Ariel Hahn	71
<i>Beyond Seder Night: Ki L'Olam Chasdo</i> ~ Chaim Bell	72
<i>Rambam's Unspoken Polemic Against Adir Hu</i> ~ Rabbi Aryeh Wasserman	74
<i>Chad Gadya: Destined For Destruction</i> ~ Yotam Berendt	78

Introduction

Rabbi Dr. Dvir Ginsberg ~ *Rosh HaYeshiva*

There is something magical when children ask questions. From a toddler's pointing and gesturing to a teenager's existential angst, the back and forth is a treasured part of the parental experience. Questions and answers help form the strongest possible connections between parent and child. As we know, the process of inquiry occupies an important perch at the *Seder*. It is formalized as an obligation of sorts through *Sheilat HaBen*, the children asking questions. While many point to *Ma Nishtana* as the ultimate example of this inquiry, there are other instances where *Sheilat HaBen* appears throughout the *Seder*. The Talmud (Pesachim 108b) discusses two instances of this model. The first involves dispensing treats to the children to ensure they do not sleep and ask questions. The second refers to a "*chatifa*" of the *matzot*, a term that the commentaries struggle to translate. Whatever this "*chatifa*" is, it is another example of ensuring children are awake and asking questions.

Meiri understands the Talmud on a basic level. He explains that, for example, by giving the children these treats, they will stay awake and see what is taking place at the *Seder*. In doing so, they will then ask what is occurring, embedded in the questions of *Ma Nishtana*. In a similar vein, Rashbam explains that "*chatifa*" refers to preventing young children from consuming matza early in the night, as they will become satiated and fall asleep. The common theme here is the importance of the children staying awake and then asking questions.

Rambam, however, offers a subtle yet important distinction. In reviewing the commandments of the *Seder* (Hilchot Chametz U'Matzah 7:1-3), he relays the commandment to tell the story of the Exodus alongside the Torah's dictate of "*Ve'hegadta Le'Vincha*" the telling of the events to one's children. In the third *halacha*, he discusses the need to create changes:

"He should make changes on this night so that the children will see and will [be motivated to] ask: 'Why is this night different from all other nights?' until he replies to them: 'This and this occurred; this and this took place.' What changes should be made? He should give them roasted seeds and nuts; the table should be taken away before they eat; matzot should be snatched (chaitfa) from each other and the like."

Rambam essentially ignores the issue of the children sleeping; rather, he looks to the items (treats) and actions (removing the table) as being the vehicles of change.

This seems to be an odd debate, where the locus of the issue rests on such a minor issue. In truth, this debate may highlight two different ways to view the mechanism and centrality of children asking questions during the *Seder* night. Meiri and Rashbam, among others, are focused on the fulfillment of the commandment of *Ve'hegadta Le'Vincha* as a standalone

obligation. Therefore, it is critical that those children available be awake and present at the *Seder*. They must be defined as participants, allowing for the fulfillment of the above obligation. Once they occupy the same seats as everyone else at the table, they can now receive the commandment which can be fulfilled. This view highlights a very legalistic manner in viewing the nature of the obligation.

Rambam, however, is focused solely on the changes. The concept of *Ve'hegadta Le'Vincha* is in fact the highest form of telling over the story of the Exodus, and this telling must be done as an act of Talmud Torah. Learning Torah is defined by the back and forth, the question and answer, the inquiry and resolution. It is never a static enterprise; rather, it is a journey to the depths of God's infinite wisdom. The commandment of telling the story thus is imbued with the construct of Talmud Torah. For Rambam, the questions are never limited by the Haggadah, nor are the answers. The *Seder* is exemplified by discovery of the bold and creative, the text serving as a stepping stone. Once the path to inquiring is opened by the children, the peak form of the commandment can be accomplished.

The back and forth described above is the music one hears in the Migdal Beit Midrash. It is a special place, where the thirst for knowledge and desire to comprehend is never quenched. The spirit of discovery is always on full display. And this spirit can be found in the pages of this year's Haggadah Supplement, a tremendous achievement bringing together the insights of our illustrious rebbeim and students. I hope these ideas assist in elevating your Seder experience.

The Four Kosot

Ariel Ganopolsky ~ Migdal 5782; Brooklyn NY

Chazal instituted drinking four cups of wine on the seder night in order to increase the joy of redemption and give expression to our freedom. On every Yom Tov there is a mitzvah to rejoice through drinking wine, but for Pesach, Chazal further integrated four cups of wine into the Seder. This allows our joy to find expression in each of its phases. Kiddush is recited over the first cup. The story of the Exodus and the first part of Hallel are recited over the second cup. Birkat Hamazon is recited over the third cup. Finally, we pour the fourth cup, and recite the second part of Hallel and the expanded "Great Hallel."

There are two opinions when it comes to saying "*borei pri hagafen*" on the four cups. The Sephardim hold, based on the opinion of the Rosh, that the *bracha* is only recited on the first and third cup. Ashkenazic authorities, however, maintain that one should say a new *bracha* on each cup throughout the seder.

The Sephardic opinion seems fairly straight forward. On Shabbat and Yom Tov, we recite Kiddush prior to the meal, and part of Kiddush is the *bracha* of *borei pri hagafen*; as we know, it is the *bracha hana'a* (a brocha hana'a is the brocha we say before we benefit from something) on the wine. Another *bracha* is recited on the third cup, as at that point in the Seder, we have completed Birkat Hamazon. This would be considered a *hefsek* (break) between the initial *bracha* we said at Kiddush and the wine we are about to drink.

The Ashkenazi opinion is more challenging to understand. The main problem with adding unnecessary *brachot* is that each unnecessary *bracha* is a *bracha levatala* (saying G-d's name in vain). There must be a compelling reason for these 2 additional *brachot*.

The Vilna Gaon (Gra) claims that there actually is a *hefsek* between all the cups throughout the Seder and thus a new *bracha* must be recited. There are two reasons for this way of thinking. The first is that time between the first and second cups is normally more than 72 minutes, which is the usual amount of time for one to digest food. Therefore if one were to eat again, he would have to recite another *bracha*. His second reason for claiming there is a *hefsek* is that we are not allowed to drink wine during Maggid (the re-telling of the story of leaving Egypt).

This answer was not very satisfying, leading to some questions. First, why is the time between the first and second cup a *hefsek*, whereas the *bracha* made on Karpas can also apply on the Maror we have later in the Seder. What about the fact that even if we are not eating, we are still at the table; there even is a glass of wine in front of us for most of Maggid. We also know that if one were to start a meal and realize that he has to *daven* Mincha, there is no need for a new *bracha* afterwards, even though he is not allowed to drink wine during the prayer.

The Mordechai tries to escape the issue by suggesting that since we know the order of the Seder and we know that we are going to have to drink four cups, we should have in mind that the first *bracha* should only include any drinking of wine up to the second cup.

Another explanation is offered by the Magen Avraham. He explains that every cup is its own *mitzvah* and should have its own *bracha*. Let's assume he is correct. One could still ask, that doesn't mitigate adding *birchat hana'a*, as it is not a *birkat hamitzvah*. Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach takes an interesting approach to this issue. He says that in this circumstance, *borei pri hagafen* does act like a *birkat hamitzvah* (like the bracha we say on Maror), thus negating this challenge to the Magen Avraham's suggestion.

We have asked a lot of questions about this practice. While questions to the avot are certainly at the core of our Seder experience, let us not forget that at the end of the day, *minhag avoteinu b'yadenu!*

Kadesh

Yaakov Neustadter ~ *Head Madrich*

This year the first night of Pesach is on Shabbat, which gives us the opportunity to explore the relationship between the two *yamim tovim*. In the Ten Commandments given in Parshat Yitro, we learn that Shabbat is a sign for us to remember that Hashem created the heavens and the earth.

“כִּי שֵׁשֶׁת־יָמִים עָשָׂה יְקוּק אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת־הָאָרֶץ וְאֶת־הַיָּם וְאֶת־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר־בָּם וַיָּנַח בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי עַל־כֵּן בֵּרַךְ יְקוּק אֶת־יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת וַיְקַדְּשֶׁהוּ:”

In contrast to these *pesukim*, in Parshat Va'etchanan Moshe tells Bnei Israel that the observance of Shabbat is in commemoration of Yetziat Mitzrayim:

“זָכַרְתָּ כִּי־עֲבַד הָיִיתָ | בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וַיֹּצֵאֲךָ יְקוּק אֱלֹהֶיךָ מִשָּׁם בְּיַד חֲזָקָה וּבְזֵרַע נְטוּיָה עַל־כֵּן צִוָּךְ יְקוּק אֱלֹהֶיךָ לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת־יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת:”

We see that along with the duality of “zachor” and “shamor”, Shabbat also seems to be a sign of commemoration for two different events in history: one being the creation of the world and the other being the exodus from Egypt.

The relationship between Shabbat and the creation of the world is direct. Hashem rested from work on the seventh day of creation, and thus brought about the existence of Shabbat. By observing Shabbat and refraining from work we are commemorating the original Shabbat on the seventh day of creation and recognizing Hashem as the Creator of the world.

But what would be the meaning of keeping Shabbat in commemoration of Yetziat Mitzrayim? Is there a new element of Shabbat that was produced from the exodus, or is this just another important event that deserves commemoration, thereby adding it to the list. Could we suggest that after Yetziat Mitzrayim, the main focus of Shabbat has shifted, relegating the creation of the earth to some secondary place?

The Ramban addresses this question, and concludes that keeping Shabbat "זכר ליציאת מצרים" is essentially the same as keeping it "זכר למעשה בראשית":

"וטעם על כן צוּר לעשות את יום השבת" - ... והראוי יותר לומר כי בעבור היות יציאת מצרים מורה על אלוך קדמון מחדש חפץ. ויכול כאשר פירשתי בדבור הראשון על כן אמר בכאן אם יעלה בלבך ספק על השבת המורה על החדוש והחפץ והיכולת תזכור מה שראו עיניך ביציאת מצרים שהיא לך לראיה ולזכר הנה השבת זכר ליציאת מצרים ויציאת מצרים זכר לשבת כי יזכרו בו ויאמרו השם הוא מחדש בכל אותות ומופתים ועושה בכל כרצונו כי הוא אשר ברא הכל במעשה בראשית וזה טעם על כן צוּר יקוּק אלקיך לעשות את יום השבת ... והמשכיל יבין" (רמב"ן על דברים ה':טו')

The Ramban explains that by remembering Yetziat Mitzrayim and all the miracles Hashem did for us, we come to recognize that Hashem as Almighty and has complete control over the

natural world. This is a tangible way for us to recognize that Hashem alone is the Creator and is all powerful.

The Rambam, however, in his Guide for the Perplexed (b,31), disagrees with the Ramban and claims that there is a new aspect of shabbat that was introduced with the exodus from Egypt:

"Two different reasons are given for this commandment, because of two different objects. In the Decalogue in Exodus, the following reason is given for distinguishing the Sabbath: "For in six days," etc. But in Deuteronomy (chap. 5:15) the reason is given: "And thou shalt remember that thou hast been a slave in the land of Egypt, etc., therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee," etc. This difference can easily be explained. In the former, the cause of the honour and distinction of the day is given; comp. "Therefore the Lord hath blessed the day of the Sabbath and sanctified it" (Exod. 20:10), and the cause for this is, "For in six days," etc. But the fact that God has given us the law of the Sabbath and commanded us to keep it, is the consequence of our having been slaves; for then our work did not depend on our will, nor could we choose the time for it; and we could not rest. Thus God commanded us to abstain from work on the Sabbath, and to rest, for two purposes; namely, (1) That we might confirm the true theory, that of the Creation, which at once and clearly leads to the theory of the existence of God. (2) That we might remember how kind God has been in freeing us from the burden of the Egyptians.--The Sabbath is therefore a double blessing: it gives us correct notions, and also promotes the well-being of our bodies."

The Rambam distinguishes between keeping Shabbat as a reminder of a fundamental truth - "that we might confirm the true theory, that of the Creation" - and keeping Shabbat in practice as commemoration of the kindness of Hashem who redeemed us from slavery and gave us a day of rest.

I would like to expand on the Rambam's distinction and suggest that there are two distinct components of Shabbat. The first came about when Hashem decided to rest on the seventh day of creation. With this decision, Hashem sanctified the Shabbat and made it a holy day. This *kedusha* is an objective aspect of Shabbat, it is "קביעא וקיימא". Hashem's relationship with the world at this point is that of Creator and creation. There is no one to observe the Shabbat, it is just a reality, a truth. Shabbat is a sign that Hashem is the Creator of the world.

When Hashem redeemed his people from the slavery of Egypt, there formed a new relationship. Now as a nation, Bnei Yisrael recognize Hashem not only as the distant, objective Creator of the world, but rather the close and caring redeemer from slavery. Now when Bnei Yisrael keep Shabbat, they are reflecting the ways of Hashem himself, as they work for six days and can rest on the seventh. This is a new level in the relationship between Hashem and his people, an "אות", a sign of the covenant that we are God's nation and he is our God.

I think these two aspects of Shabbat are reflected in a famous *machloket* regarding which day Shabbat is to be observed:

Rav Huna said: One who was walking along the way or in the desert, and he does not know when Shabbat occurs, he counts six days from the day that he realized that he lost track of Shabbat and then observes one day as Shabbat. Hiyya bar Rav says: He first observes one day as Shabbat and then he counts six weekdays. The Gemara explains: With regard to what do they disagree? One Sage, Rav Huna, held: It is like the creation of the world, weekdays followed by Shabbat. And one Sage, Hiyya bar Rav, held: It is like Adam, the first man, who was created on the sixth day. He observed Shabbat followed by the six days of the week. (Shabbat 69)

We can clearly see two aspects of Shabbat presented in this Gemara. I would like to suggest that at the core of this *machloket* are the two elements of Shabbat mentioned above. Hiyya bar Rav maintains that we keep Shabbat like Adam. Adam was created on the sixth day, and immediately was confronted with the reality of Shabbat the very next day. In this regard, we are observing Shabbat out of recognition that Hashem is the Creator of the world. Rav Huna holds that the more significant element of Shabbat is that we align our ways with the ways of Hashem. By imitating Hashem and following his example of working only for six days and resting on the seventh, we are strengthening our relationship with Him. In a sense, we are resting together with Hashem on Shabbat.

This duality of Shabbat is expressed as well in the terms the Torah uses in the Ten Commandments. The word “zachor”, to remember, is used in the first tablets where Shabbat is זכר למעשה בראשית. Remembering is a very fitting description for a commandment of observing Shabbat as a sign of God’s sovereignty over the world. It lacks personal connotation, yet demands holding a truth firmly in our minds. In the second tablets, the Torah uses the term “shamor”, literally to protect. Bnei Yisrael are given the Shabbat as a gift from Hashem and it is theirs to protect and observe as a sign of connection between God and his people.

I believe that to some extent we have a similar duality on the first night of Pesach. All year round, we have a mitzvah of remembering Yetziat Mitzrayim. This is more of an intellectual commandment, that we should have before our eyes at all times the reality that God redeemed us from Egypt, took us to be His, people and we accepted him as our God. But on seder night, a new aspect is introduced, that of “סיפור יציאת מצריים”. Along with remembering, we have a mitzvah to tell a story, to act out the scenes from the Haggadah, to involve the children in relating our special relationship with God from generation to generation.

Seder night is all about experiencing and reliving that momentous occasion of Yetziat Mitzrayim, deepening our relationship with Hashem, and passing on the *mesorah* to the future generations. Seder night has us leave the realm of abstract remembering, entering instead the colorful and engaging story of our connection as individuals, families and a nation with Hashem.

U'rechatz: What Happened to the *Bracha*?

Rabbi Chaim Ozer Chait - *Rosh HaYeshiva Emeritus*

We begin the Seder night, as a usual Friday night or *Yom Tov* meal, by reciting *Kiddush*. We then proceed with a practice that is unique and is only done on the Seder night: *U'rechatz* – we wash our hands as if we are about to eat bread, but we do not make a *bracha* on the washing, and we do not eat bread, but we eat *Karpas* instead. This behooves us to ask why we are washing if we are not going to eat bread, and why do we not make a *bracha*?

The truth is that *U'rechatz* does not have to do with the laws of the Pesach Seder but with a rule that is applicable all year round. The Shulchan Aruch (in Orach Chaim 158:4) says, "If one eats food that has been dipped in one of the seven liquids (such as water) and the food has not yet dried, he is obligated to wash his hands without a *bracha*." This *halacha* finds its origin in Pesachim 115a. A major debate between the *Rishonim* is if this law is applicable today. The reason behind this law is based on the laws of *Tuma/Tahara* that was practiced during the times of the *Beis Hamikdash*. There is a debate between Rashi and Tosfos if this law should be practiced today, resulting in three different opinions: 1) We do not practice this custom, which is the majority of most authorities, 2) We wash without a *bracha*, 3) We wash with a *bracha*, which is the custom of the Gra. Therefore, since we are dipping the *Karpas* into water the question arises, do we wash, and with or without a *bracha*? According to the Gra, you should wash with a *bracha*. But the practice of most people is to wash without a *bracha*. This raises the following question. If the rule of *U'rechatz* is not related to Pesach but it is a *halacha* that pertains to eating of food that was submerged in one of the seven liquids, then why don't we practice this all year? Why only on the night of the Seder!

Rabbi Dovid Feinstein ZT"L, in his Haggadah Kol Dodi, quotes the Chaye Adam who explains that it is the practice to do changes during the night of the Seder for the purpose of arousing the curiosity of the children. This will encourage them to ask questions and increase their interest in the Seder. The custom came about to strictly follow the *gemara* in Pesachim and wash without reciting a *bracha*. Being curious, the children will ask, Why are we washing if we aren't going to eat bread? This will introduce them to the purpose of *Karpas*.

I would like to offer another explanation of the washing before *Karpas*. One of the most basic themes of the Seder is the *Korban Pesach*. Although we are lacking the actual *korban*, nevertheless, many reminders were instituted to remind us of its important role it has in the Seder. It is on the *ka'ara*, the Seder plate. It is in the words of the Haggadah, "The Pesach offering that our fathers ate..." And finally, we conclude the Seder with *Tzafun*, eating the *afikoman* which was instituted as a memorial to the *Korban Pesach*. We therefore want to demonstrate the highest standard of being *tahor* during the eating of the *Korban Pesach*. It therefore became the custom to follow the strictest rules pertaining to being *tahor* the night of the Seder. We give the message over to all those who are with us the night of the Seder, that

our Seder isn't fully complete until we have once again the *Korban Pesach*. It is amazing that today we stand less than one hundred feet from where the *Mizbeach* is located and the only thing that is preventing us from bringing the *Korban Pesach* is the "ratzon," the desire, of the people. Let us hope that we will all be *zocha* to share in the *Korban Pesach* speedily in our time.

The Seder Plate: Fantastic Beasts & When to Eat Them

Noam Narrowe ~ *Migdal 5782; Denver CO*

For each and every Jewish holiday there is some sort of image or object that one immediately associates with the chag. For example, there are *hamentashens* for Purim and the *arba minim* for Sukkot. Pesach is no exception to this phenomenon, with its countless symbols and icons. Matzah is certainly the main one, but a close second could be one of the most baffling aspects of the tradition of Pesach: the Seder Plate. There are six different foods, seemingly disconnected items -ranging from the Matzah a mitzvah d'eorayta, to the saltwater for dipping the karpas, arguably a much later minhag - what message is this conglomerate plate supposed to convey?

On the plate we have the *beitza* (egg), *maror* (horseradish), *zeroa* (shank bone), *charoset* (charoset), *karpas* (vegetable to be dipped) and *chazeret* (bitter herb). Although one could simply use the classic answer of "it's meant for the children to ask about ", let us suggest that uniting these different *mitzvot* and *minhagim* together enables one to employ creative storytelling to engage the most important people at the Seder: the children.

On a simple level these artifacts may serve as props for retelling the historical Pesach story. The horseradish and the bitter herb being a representation of the different forms of bitterness we felt within Egypt. The *charoset* can be the mortar of the stones that were used in ancient architecture. When Pharaoh intensified the workload of the Jews in Egypt, part of it was having to hand make their mortar from mud and reeds. Due to this there is a tradition within some communities to always hand make their *charoset*. The *karpas* serves in place of the reeds of the Nile that hid Moshe. The shank bone is a reminder of the *Korban Pesach* which enabled us to be redeemed from Egypt. The hardboiled egg can with its tough outer shell, can represent the hardening of Pharaoh's.

One could however choose to be more creative with these storytelling props. For the sleepy child I turn to them and say, "You see that plate? It tells the story of the Leviathan, the Behemoth and the Ziz."

Rav Chaim Palaggi, has an interesting addition to the keara - a fish. In his sefer Moed Lkol Chai, he suggests reciting the following *yehi ratzon*, "May it be your that You merit us to eat from the banquet of the Leviathan." This is in reference to the aggadic passage with states that the Leviathan, the largest sea creature of the deep was slaughtered, pickled and set aside for the tzaddikim.

Rav Sherira Gaon expands this by suggesting that the shank bone, egg and fish each allude to the three mythical creatures in Jewish tradition: the Behemoth, the largest of land mammals, the

aforementioned Leviathan, and the Ziz, a massive bird capable of blocking the sun with its wings.

The Midrash shares with us what will become of these fantastically exotic creatures:

“The Holy One said: In this world you have eaten manna through the merit of your ancestors; but in the world to come I will feed you the Behemoth, Ziz and Leviathan. You will eat through your own merit. Thus it is stated, (Job 41:6): ‘Shall trade associates make a banquet of him? Shall they divide him up among merchants?’”(Midrash Tanchuma Buber, Beshalach 24:1)

Expanding on this very creative symbolism, the other items on the plate could arguably represent the foods of this world; the land vegetation represented by the Maror, and the fruits of the tree, contained in the charoset. Those foods represent our redemption by God via the merit of our forefathers - thus it is tainted with the sharpness of the chazeret, the cooked foods represent the ultimate redemption which will come one day soon, when God will deem us redeemable based on our own merit.

Whether you choose to share with your children the simple story of the Exodus, the exotic tale of fantastic beasts and when we will eat them, or anything in between, it is imperative that every family tell their own story behind the Seder plate.

Yachatz

Rabbi Ashi Harrow - *Mashgiach Ruchani*

The '*seder*' within the Seder is that after Kiddush is recited, we wash our hands in order to fulfill the first dipping of the night, the dipping of the 'karpas'. After the eating of the 'karpas', the Shulchan Aruch instructs us to take the middle Matzah and break it in two parts; one will be used later on for the eating of the Afikoman, while the other will be used for the birkat *Al Achilat Matzah* before *Shulchan Orech*. This action of breaking the Matzah into two parts is what the Haggadah refers to as 'Yachatz'. We then proceed with the central mitzvah of Maggid - to tell the story of Pesach to our children.

Why do these two actions of eating Matzah have to be done on a Matzah that is broken? This is based upon one of the understandings our Sages bring to explain the term 'lechem oni'- used by the Torah while referring to Matzah. One of the opinions suggested in the Gemara is that this word stems from the word 'ani' one who is poor. Just as one who is poor doesn't usually eat a complete loaf of bread, so too, the Matzah should be eaten in small pieces on the Seder night. In accordance with this opinion, we perform both the initial eating of Achilat Matzah and the later Afikoman on broken pieces of Matzah. If so, then why break the Matzah at this stage of the Seder? According to the above, this 'breaking' is not needed until much later on!

We can perhaps suggest that we break the Matzah at this time to fulfill an additional opinion in that gemara. Shmuel understands the meaning of the words 'lechem oni' from the root '*ve'anita ve'amarta...*' or "and you will call out loud". Rashi explains that one should recite the Hallel and the **Haggadah** while having the Matzah in his presence.

However, this also cannot be the reason. Because according to this position that one must recite the story of redemption of Egypt while having the Matzah present, it's sufficient to have a whole Matzah in front of him. Nothing is added according to this position, by breaking the Matzah at this point [see shulchan aruch harav for another explanation]. If this is the case, we are back to our original question, why should we break the Matzah at this point of the Seder?

There are many answers introduced to answer this question. We will focus on one of them.

Let's think about two additional questions. One is obligated to start the meal immediately after *Kiddush* (*Kiddush b'makom seudah*) and according to many opinions if one delays his meal for such a long time, he did not fulfill his obligation of reciting Kiddush despite him still being situated in the same location. How are we not bothered by this tremendous '*Hefsek*' between the Kiddush and the eating of Matzah?

Furthermore, after we drink the first of four cups of wine, the *Shulchan Aruch* writes that one should not yet recite a *bracha achrona*. This raises the question: since most of our *Sedarim* go on for a long time before drinking the second cup of wine, and by that time, the first wine already has digested, this seemingly nullifies our obligation to say a *bracha achrona* according to many poskim. How can we explain this deliberate negation of a chiyuv?

We can perhaps answer this second question with an understanding of the reason behind the obligation to recite the *beracha achrona* within the time of digestion. One explanation is that it is needed to praise and thank *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* for the food while you still have traces of the experience of eating within you. However, when you no longer feel the '*hana'a*'- enjoyment from the food, you lose the opportunity to recite a *beracha achrona*.

There is an additional approach to understand the need of reciting the *beracha achrona* within the time of digestion. This understanding suggests not that you need '*hana'a*' present while reciting the *beracha*, but rather that there must be a clear connection between a *beracha* recited and the reason it was recited for. Just like *beracha rishona* has to be recited right before one's action, '*over leasiyatan*', so too, *beracha achrona* also has to project its connection to what you are saying it upon. Based on this explanation, as long as you are taking part in a continuous *seudah*, even if digestion time is up, it is evident that you are still in the process of the *seudah* and therefore the *beracha* is still connected to the action of the previous eating or drinking. This is enough to keep the obligation of *beracha achrona* still 'alive'.

With this understanding, let us return to the first question of *Kiddush b'makom seuda*. The same is true in that matter; the *Kiddush* must be connected to the *seuda*, enhancing the *seuda* of Shabbat or Yom Tov. As long as there is a clear connection between the *Kiddush* and the meal itself, we are fulfilling the obligation of *Kiddush b'makom seuda*.

If this idea is correct, we can now understand our original question regarding the timing of *Yachatz*. We just made *Kiddush*, and we ate some Karpas, but now we are about to start a long break by reciting the *Maggid* and discussing *Divrei Torah* on different matters of *Yetziat Mitzrayim*. It is very important to us at this point to make it very clear that the *Kiddush* that we recited is not separated from the continuation of our meal later on, but rather this is a process that begins with *Kiddush* and that later on we will continue to eat the Yom Tov meal. By breaking the *Matzah* at this point we emphasize that, in a certain sense, we are starting the meal now, even though we are not yet eating our *Matzah*.

Practically speaking, from this understanding it is important that we have the right intention when breaking the *Matzah*. Not only should we be aware to "not mess up" the breaking, ensuring we have one tiny smaller piece and one larger, but also keep in mind that this is the beginning of our *Seudat Chag!*

Ha Lachma Anya

Koby Klugman-Desmond ~ Migdal 5782; Seattle WA

Going back as far as I can remember, *Ha Lachma Anya* always stuck out in my memory when we recited it at my family's Seder. Maybe it's the tune that my family sings, maybe it's the curious, foreign-sounding Aramaic that it's written in (which is very common in the Seder as a whole), or maybe it's the interesting prompt it makes for the beginning of the *Maggid* portion of the Seder. Whatever it is that's special about it, when I would start reciting *Ha Lachma Anya*, I definitely would feel as if the *mitzvah* of *Sippur Yetziat Mitzrayim* has begun.

Ha Lachma Anya is something of an enigma. It contains many different themes that are all integral to the Seder, but when compiled into one paragraph seem contradictory. The text begins by describing how the *Matzah* (which is raised during the recitation) is *lachma anya* (*lechem oni* in Hebrew), poor man's bread, which was eaten by our forefathers in *Mitzrayim*. This stark and abrupt declaration is clearly meant to engage people in the story of Pesach, and to help them view themselves as if they were the ones who were leaving Egypt. This concept is an integral part of the *mitzvah* of *Sippur Yetziat Mitzrayim*.

However, immediately after this, there is an invitation to the hungry and needy to come partake (presumably of the *Matzah*), feast, and celebrate Pesach. Why, after describing how the *Matzah* is the bread of affliction, do we invite people to come and eat it? Granted, we are trying to view ourselves as if we just left Egypt, and therefore we are eating it since it was eaten by our forefathers when they left Egypt. But why would poor people want to eat it? Wouldn't it just remind them of the experience they endure every day? Shouldn't we be offering them fancy food and a grandiose meal? After all, another aspect of the Seder night is that we are supposed to act like free people, even royalty. The very act of inviting poor people indicates that we are rich enough to afford to feed ourselves and others, unlike the Jews in Egypt, who were slaves and had nothing but the clothes on their backs. So why are we offering "poor man's bread" to poor people when we should be helping them to experience freedom?

This contradiction is enhanced in the next part of *Ha Lachma Anya*, which says: "Now we are here, next year may we be in the land of Israel; now we are slaves, next year may we be free people." This line should evoke wonder - what are we supposed to be feeling on the Seder night? Are we supposed to feel as if we are in exile and as if we are still slaves as this line suggests, or are we supposed to feel like we are free people?

We can resolve this contradiction if we take a look at a couple of *pesukim*. The first is essential to the whole idea of having a Seder (and which is also quoted during the Seder itself). The Torah says (*Shemos 13:8*) that on the day that we celebrate Pesach: "*V'higadta l'vincha bayom hahu: 'ba'avor zeh asah Hashem li b'tzeiti mimitzrayim'*" - "You will tell your son on that day: 'It is because of this that God did for me when I left Egypt.'"

These *pesukim* show us that not only must we remember the miracles God did for us, but we must share this experience with others. The Torah only singles out each person's obligation to teach their children, but *Ha Lachma Anya* is telling us that it applies to others as well. Indeed, part of the invitation in *Ha Lachma Anya* is that the needy should come and celebrate Pesach - "*yeitei v'yipsach.*"

But as was stated above, there are two sides to this obligation - we are supposed to feel as if we are still poor men **and** we are also supposed to feel like we are free men. *Ha Lachma Anya* instructs that we should invite people in to eat but also that we are eating the “bread of affliction,” which it highlighted at the outset. So why does *Ha Lachma Anya* seemingly choose to focus on the aspect of slavery? Why does it go so far as to say that we should invite poor people to our homes in order to experience slavery and eat the “bread of affliction?”

The answer to this is found in a *pasuk* in the paragraph of *V'hayah Im Shamoah*, the second paragraph of *Shema*. This part of *Shema* details the concepts of reward and punishment in the context of the Jews settling in the land of Israel. In describing the latter, the Torah says (*Devarim 11:16*): “*Hishamru lachem pen yiphteh levavchem v'sartem va'avadtem elohim achayrim v'hishtachavitem lahem*” - “Guard yourselves, lest your hearts become seduced and you turn away and serve other gods and you bow to them.” After this, God says that if we turn towards other gods He will quickly destroy us and drive us from our land as punishment. Rashi explains (*Ibid, Hishamru lachem*) that the reason the verse discussing our punishment is juxtaposed with the verses about how God will make us prosperous is because rebellion against God can only occur amongst those who have become complacent and satiated. Once people are comfortable, it can cause them to forget God and think of themselves instead.

This is the lesson *Ha Lachma Anya* is coming to teach us: although on *Seder* night we are supposed to act like rich men, we must also act like poor men. Additionally, remembering how we were once slaves is even more important than showing that we are more fortunate, lest we forgot God in our fortune. It is so important, in fact, that even poor people, who have only ever known poverty and dependence on God and others, must eat *Lechem Oni*, poor man's bread. This is shown in the language of *Ha Lachma Anya*, which, as its name suggests, highlights the importance of experiencing the Exodus as poor men who still feel a connection and dependence on God, as opposed to rich men who have forgotten Him. This is the ultimate purpose of the verse “*V'higadta l'vincha*” - the *pasuk* is telling us that we have an obligation to teach future generations, those who are ignorant of the miracles that happened in Egypt, lest they forget God once we have settled in our land and achieved prosperity.

May we all keep in mind the lesson of *Ha Lachma Anya* and how we must always remember God and give thanks to Him, especially on one of our highest moments of the year.

Mah Nishtanah

Joe Gladstein ~ *Migdal 5781; Seattle WA*

After weeks of being taught the song and words in school, the most stress inducing moment at the seder for any youngest child is singing the Mah Nishtana. Often enough there's a few mistakes in pronunciation and little understanding of what is actually being said. However, as a person matures, they often come to appreciate the symbolism hidden behind the Four Questions.

This year, during my pre-Pesach Haggadah review, I took the opportunity to focus on the order of the questions. They seem chronologically out of order, the third question discusses Karpas, which we do before Maror, which we inquire about second. Why do we ask about Maror, before asking about Karpas? Why out of order? between the first and last two questions.

Rabbi Tevele Bondi, in his commentary on the Haggadah, Maarechet Heidenbaum suggest that the first two inquiries are in reference to what we can't afford in a state of slavery while the remaining two elaborate on luxuries we could acquire upon redemption. In other words, these two sets of questions serve as a timeline to show that we were slaves In Egypt eating *matzah* and bitter herbs to becoming royal subject in the court of God, dipping our vegetables and leaning. Since it can be difficult to explain this to a child, we teach them to couple the questions accordingly so that this shift, which we elaborate on in Maggid, is embedded within the questions themselves.

So before the commencement of the eye roll in anticipation of listening to this year's rendition of the four questions, I suggest we all look at the Mah Nishtana with fresh eyes and uncover more sophisticated meanings couched within.

Avadim Hayinu

Mordechai Levoritz ~ *Migdal 5782; Brooklyn NY*

At the very start of our long journey answering “*Ma Nishtana*,” we recite “*Avadim Hayinu*”. Our choice of starting off our story with our stint as slaves in Egypt seems sensible at first glance. It says in the Mishna (Pesachim 10:4) that we are supposed to “start with our disgrace and end in our glory.” The reason for this seems to be when you begin with an understanding of where we were, it leads to more appreciation and praise later. What is the “disgrace”? We find a debate between the Amoraic greats, Rav and Shmuel (Pesachim 116a), that discuss this very issue. Rav maintains that we should start off Maggid with the “disgrace” that we were idolaters, yet God *still* chose to redeem us. This is what happened first chronologically. However, we seem to have adopted Shmuel’s position in focusing on our slavery first, along with our redemption from it, seeing as that is the actual story we focus on at the Seder.

After we mention our servitude in Egypt, we recite, “Even if we were all scholars, wise, and elders, we would still be obligated to tell the story of exodus from Egypt.” The Rambam, in his Mishneh Torah (Halachot of chametz and matzah 7,1) codifies this as well. In relaying the Mitzva to say over the miracles of Pesach, he writes, “And even if you have no sons; and even if we were all great sages, we would still be obligated in telling the story of the exodus; and one that relays the story at length is worthy of praise.” Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik comments on this (Harerei Kedem vol. 2, 214) and asks, why did the Rambam mention all these Halachot in one fell swoop? They all have to do with the same Mitzvah, to be sure, but the Rambam seems to mention them in succession. It is as if one Halacha just flows into the other, when at first blush it feels kind of forced. For example, what does the obligation of reciting Maggid even if one has no children have to do with the obligation to relay to your children Maggid even if they were sages? Why would the Rambam write it like this? What idea is he trying to convey?

We can be confident in believing the Rambam is introducing a novel idea. The Rambam was **not** consolidating three separate Halachot next to each other for the sake of efficiency. Rabbi Soloveitchik explains as follows: he was putting forth one halacha, followed by two aspects of it. The Halacha is that one who relays the story at length is worthy of praise. This is not referring to an aspect of time. Rather, what is meant by “at length” is that we should add and elaborate as much as possible to the ideas of the Exodus. This obligation is not different for someone who already knows the story, or for someone who does not have any children. **This** is the Mitzvah of *Sippur Yetziat Mitzrayim*. Now that we know this, we can understand why the Rambam said these three things in one breath, so to speak. The lesson is that even if we are all sages, even if we have no children, our obligation still stands: *darshen*, immerse as much as we can into the

story. Even if we think we know it all already, even if the children will not ask, it does not matter. We still need to fulfill our obligation.

As a proof to this idea, the Rav also points out that in the Rambam's Haggadah, it says: "**shekol hamarbeh**", instead of "**vechol**", like we have in our modern Haggadot. The difference in translation is critical: "Even if we were all scholars, wise, and elders, we would still need to tell the story of the exodus from Egypt, **because** the more you tell over the story the better,". This is instead of "...**and** the more you tell over the story the better." This clearly shows that the Rambam felt that the reason for all the previous statements are not their own self-contained ideas; rather, they all hinge on this idea of speaking at length about the Exodus. Do not feel forced to have a Seder until 3:00 AM; rather, if you step away from the table feeling as though you have learnt something new, you've already accomplished your goal. And now that you have read this, I hope that you have.

The Seder: A Discussion or an Experience?

Ezra Klein ~ *Migdal 5782; West Hempstead NY*

The passages in Maggid have a large variety of sources. Whether coming from Gemara, Mishnah, or being formulated in the Haggadah itself, each has its own idea to share. However, very few have a *different* version in the Haggadah than the one found in the original source. That's exactly what happens in the classic story of the *Seder* in Bnei Brak. A group of *Tannaim* are reclining in Bnei Brak and discuss the story of *Yetziat Mitzrayim* until their students come to tell them that dawn has arrived and it is time to recite *Shema*. This is a familiar story to one who's been through a few *Sedarim*. However, when looking at the basis for this story in the Tosefta (Pesachim 10:8), we see a much different scene. Along with an obligation to be engaged with the *halachot* of Pesach the entire night, it tells a story of a much different *Seder*. Rabban Gamliel and the elders are reclining in Lod, and are involved in (discussing) the *halachot* of Pesach the entire night. Once they hear the crowing of the rooster, they arise and head to the Beit Midrash (presumably to pray).

So what's so different about these versions? For one, the action being performed is very different. In the Haggadah the language is of "*sippur*," telling the story, whereas the figures in the Tosefta are being "*osek b'halacha*," involved in halachic discussion. In addition, the catalyst for the stopping of their discussions, as well as the characters mentioned in the stories, are entirely different: the Haggadah has the students coming in, while the Tosefta has the rooster crowing. Why does the Haggadah feel the need to make these distinctions and create a whole new formulation? Why not just use the original?

The two *Sedarim* seem to represent two different approaches to the commandments of the *Seder* night. One sees the *Seder* as an intellectual endeavor, an opportunity to focus on one area of *Halacha* and draw out ideas from it. If you recall, in the Tosefta (the original formulation), it also lists an obligation to be involved in the *Halachot* of Pesach the entire night.

This is the mindset of Rabban Gamliel and the elders, from the viewpoint of the Tosefta. They engage in stimulating conversation as the Halacha dictates, and are informed of the morning's arrival by the crow of the rooster. An intellectually meaningful night, but a normal one nonetheless. The Haggadah, on the other hand, views the *Seder* as a much more experiential undertaking. Why did the rabbis in Bnei Brak need their students to come alert them? Did they not hear the rooster as well? For these rabbis, engaging in *Sippur Yetziat Mitzrayim* and

understanding the story is a much more important aspect of the *Seder*. The *Seder* is a unique opportunity to truly understand the experience of the Exodus. One can study the *halachot* throughout the whole seven days, but only the Seder night allows one to truly understand and experience the redemption of the Jewish people. To them, staying up all night is a mere consequence of their immersion, not something borne of obligation. The rooster doesn't disturb them because all that matters is the reality of the story, not the reality of the exile. What brings these rabbis back is their students, the next generation, scrupulous in living in the ways of God and eager to carry on the tradition. Seeing this, they are able to pull themselves from one redemption and focus on another, which will be brought about by preservation of the stories and tradition of the past. It is this forward-looking formulation, which remembers what has been but remains hopeful of what will be, that the Haggadah chooses for us to read on the *Seder* night.

R' Elazar ben Azaryah; A Timeless Tale

David Ross ~ *Migdal 5782; Los Angeles CA*

What is the function of the Haggadah? There are many answers to this ambiguous open-ended question, and there could be more than one correct answer. In order to analyze the function of the Haggadah, first we must analyze its components and the message they express. Let us examine the purpose of including this passage, which is a small excerpt from Mishnayot Berachot, and then we may be able to ascertain some of the messages the Haggadah is attempting to purvey. Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah in his opening statement says that “he is *like* a man of seventy years.” Berachot 28a tells the full story of how Rabbi Elazar Ben Azariah was supposed to take the office of Rabbi Gamliel. However, since he was young, his wife doubted that people would listen to him. That day, a miracle happened and a bunch of his hair turned white. This is an example where G-d performs a miracle to help someone in their time of need, a basic and fundamental theme throughout the Haggadah.

Next we look at the explanation of Ben Zoma, who made a *derasha* to prove that one must say the third paragraph of Shema at night from Devarim 16:3, “In order that you remember the day of your going out from the land of Egypt all the days of your life.” He focuses his *derasha* on the fact that the verse uses the language of “*all* the days of your life.” Ben Zoma says that the word “all” here is superfluous, which indicates that we must mention the redemption from Egypt both by day and by night. However, the Sages offer an alternative explanation, emphasizing that the extra word teaches us we will mention the redemption of Egypt both now and in the times of *Mashiach*.

These two explanations of the verse offer two potential outlooks on life, and each one is an essential part of every Pesach Seder. The first of these is the outlook of living in the present. We must be cognizant of the divine intervention which allows us to carry on and live our lives every day and every night. This is the focus of the Seder: to experience the now, and to thank G-d for everything He has provided us leading to this moment. I would suggest that Ben Zoma’s focus of reflecting on both the past and the present as a gift from G-d is an appreciation that Rabbi Elazar would incorporate every time he said “all the days of your life” in *tefila* from then on. We must also have the perspective of planning now for the future.

However, the Sages, in their explanation, were already looking to a day where we would be in the ultimate redemption, the days of *Mashiach*. Thus, they tell us that every day we must look forward to a future in which we will experience potentially an even greater redemption than from Egypt.

These outlooks of reflecting on all times - past, present, and future - are both important for us as Jews to take into consideration. As time goes on, the world becomes more and more complex,

and to truly understand what our Judaism means to us we must look to our predecessors as well as the direction we are going to steer ourselves towards the time of salvation. So, to answer our original question: The function of the Haggadah is to remind us of our eternal faith in and appreciation of G-d. Through this, we can truly all appreciate the balance of past, present, and future that the Pesach Seder represents.

האם יש מצוה מהתורה להזכיר את יציאת מצרים כל יום?

הרב מאיר שרעבי ~ ר"ם

כתוב בפסוק: "אני ה' אלקיכם אשר הוצאתי אתכם מארץ מצרים להיות לכם לאלקים..."¹. פסוק זה הוא הסיום של פרשת ציצית, ואנו אומרים אותו בכל יום פעמיים, בבוקר ובערב, ובכך זוכרים את יציאת מצרים.

המקור לצירוף הזכרת יציאת מצרים לקריאת שמע הוא המשנה הידועה במסכת ברכות¹, שמופיעה גם בהגדה של פסח: "אמר ר' אלעזר בן עזריה: הרי אני כבן שבעים שנה ולא זכיתי שתאמר יציאת מצרים בלילות, עד שדרשה בן זומא, שנאמר: 'למען תזכור את יום צאתך מארץ מצרים כל ימי חיך'², ימי חיך- הימים, כל ימי חיך- הלילות. וחכמים אומרים: ימי חיך- העולם הזה, כל ימי חיך- להביא לימות המשיח".

אם-כן, המקור לחיוב זכירת יציאת מצרים בכל יום הוא הפסוק בפרשת ראה שיש בו ביטוי לרצון ה' שנזכר בכל יום בחיינו את יציאת מצרים. בנוסף, מכך שהמילה 'כל' מיותרת למד בן זומא שיש להזכיר את יציאת מצרים גם בלילות. מכיון שמדובר בפסוק מפורש, ברור לכאורה שזו מצוה מהתורה.

אך כשנעיין בספר המצוות של הרמב"ם לא נמצא זכר למצוה זו בתרי"ג המצוות, והמצוה היחידה שנמצא בהקשר זה היא³: "שציונו לספר ביציאת מצרים בליל חמישה עשר בניסן בהתחלת הלילה כפי צחות לשון המספר, וכל מה שיוסיף המספר ויאריך בהגדלת מה שעשה לנו ה' ומה שעשו לנו המצרים... הרי זה משובח".

ברור שמצוות **סיפור** יציאת מצרים והחובה **לזכור** את יציאת מצרים אינן חובות זהות. המטרה בסיפור יציאת מצרים היא להעביר לילדינו את כל החוויה והמסרים של יציאת מצרים, ולכן כל המרבה הרי זה משובח. חיוב זה קיים רק בליל הסדר. לעומת זאת, החובה לזכור את יציאת מצרים, אינה כוללת תיאור של פרטי המאורע, אלא רק זכירת העובדה הפשוטה שהקב"ה הוציאנו ממצרים. חובת הזכירה תקיפה בכל יום ויום ולא רק בפסח.

אם-כן, מספר המצוות משמע שאין מצוה מהתורה לזכור את יציאת מצרים, אך כמובן שהדברים קשים, שכן בן זומא למד את דבריו מפסוק מפורש, ומדוע אין לראות בכך מצוה מהתורה?

השאלה מתעצמת לאור דברי הרמב"ם עצמו בהלכות קריאת שמע⁴: "אע"פ שאין מצוות ציצית נוהגת בלילה קוראין אותה בלילה מפני שיש בה זכרון יציאת מצרים **ומצוה להזכיר יציאת מצרים ביום ובלילה שנאמר למען תזכור את יום צאתך מארץ מצרים כל ימי חיך** וקריאת שלוש פרשיות אלה היא הנקראת קריאת שמע".

בדבריו אלו מפורש שישנה מצוה לזכור את יציאת מצרים ביום ובלילה, ומכך שהרמב"ם מביא את הפסוק כמקור המצוה, משמע שהוא סובר שזו חובה מדאורייתא, אך אם כך מדוע הרמב"ם לא מונה את החובה הזו בין תרי"ג המצוות?

כהקדמה לפתרון שאלה זו, נביא בקצרה דיון שעוסק בו הרמב"ם בתחילת ספר המצוות: בתורה אין רק תרי"ג חיובים, אלא הרבה יותר, ואם-כן כיצד נדע איזה מהחיובים נחשב לאחד מתרי"ג המצוות ואיזה לא? לשם כך קובע הרמב"ם ארבעה עשר 'שורשים', קריטריונים, שעל פיהם מחליטים איזו חובה מוגדרת כאחת מתרי"ג המצוות ואיזו

¹ פרק א משנה ה.

² פרשת ראה, דברים טז, ג.

³ עשין קנז.

⁴ פרק א הלכה ג.

לא. רבות מהתשובות לשאלה שהצגנו מתבססות על אחדים מהשורשים האלה שכתב הרמב"ם בפתיחתו לספר המצוות:

הרשב"ץ⁵ סובר שלדעת הרמב"ם מצות זכרון יציאת מצרים בכל יום כלולה בתוך מצות סיפור יציאת מצרים בליל פסח. מסתבר שהרשב"ץ ביסס את דבריו על אחד משני השורשים הבאים, כפי שניסחם הרמב"ם:

"השורש האחד עשר: שאין ראוי למנות חלקי המצווה בפרט, חלק חלק בפני עצמו, כשיהיה המקובץ מהם מצווה אחת". הרמב"ם נותן כדוגמה לכלל הזה את מצוות הציצית שכוללת תכלת ולבן, ולמרות שהתכלת והלבן אינם מעכבים זה את זה, ויוצאים ידי חובה גם בציצית שאין בה תכלת כלל, בכל זאת התכלת והלבן גם יחד נחשבים למצווה אחת בלבד, כיוון שתכליתן אחת: "למען תזכרו את כל מצוות ה'". מסתבר שהרשב"ץ למד שבדומה לכך גם החובה לזכור לרגע את יציאת מצרים בכל יום שייכת לאותה תכלית של סיפור יציאת מצרים בפירוט פעם בשנה - לזכור את השגחת ה' עלינו כשהוציא אותנו ממצרים ולקח אותנו לעמו.

אך אפשרי שהרשב"ץ התבסס על: "השורש השנים עשר: שאין ראוי למנות חלקי מלאכה מן המלאכות שבא הציווי בעשייתה כל חלק וחלק בפני עצמו". הרמב"ם מביא כדוגמה לכך את מצות הקרבת קרבן עולה, שיש בו חלקים רבים: שחיטה וזריקה, והפשטת העור וכו', ועל אף שכל חלק נזכר בתורה כציווי בפני עצמו ברור שכולם יחד מהווים מעשה אחד כללי שהוא הקרבת קרבן עולה. אפשרי שהרשב"ץ למד שבדומה לכך גם זכירת יציאת מצרים בכל יום, וסיפור יציאת מצרים בליל פסח- שני אלו מהווים ביחד ענין אחד כללי של הישארות יציאת מצרים כענין משמעותי ודומיננטי בעם לאורך כל הדורות.

הנצי"ב⁶ סובר שלדעת הרמב"ם מצוות זכירת יציאת מצרים כלולה במצוות קריאת שמע⁷. הוא מבסס את דבריו על לשון ההלכה שהבאנו מהלכות קריאת שמע: "וקריאת שלוש פרשיות אלה היא הנקראת קריאת שמע". אך קשה להבין על-פי איזה שורש יש לכלול את זכרון יציאת מצרים בתוך מצות קריאת שמע, שכן אין לדמות[אט1] את שייכותם זה לזה לחלקים השונים של קרבן עולה, או ללבן ותכלת בציצית, וכך תמה גם הרב קפאח⁸.

בספר **פרי מגדים**⁹ מציע שאולי רק בלילה אין מצות עשה מהתרי"ג להזכיר את יציאת מצרים, כיון שהמקור לכך הוא רק מ'ריבוי', כלומר מהמילה 'כל ימי חיירך', המיותרת, אך עדיין יש מצווה בתרי"ג להזכיר יציאת מצרים ביום. דבריו מבוססים על השורש השני שכתב הרמב"ם בספר המצוות: "אין ראוי למנות כל מה שלמדין... בריבוי". אך כמובן שגם על פתרון זה של הפרי מגדים עדיין קשה מדוע לא מנה הרמב"ם למצווה מהתרי"ג את החובה להזכיר את יציאת מצרים ביום!?

לכן הפרי מגדים מציע כיוון נוסף: כדי לצאת ידי חובת זכרון יציאת מצרים מספיק לזכור בלב, אך סיפור יציאת מצרים חייב להיות בדיבור בפה, ובכדי למנות מצווה לאחת מהתרי"ג היא צריכה להיות מעשה אקטיבי ולכלל הפחות דיבור, אך אין די בזכירה בלב. אך מיד הפרי מגדים פורך את דברי עצמו, שכן המצוות הראשונות בספר המצוות הן להאמין במציאות ה' ובייחודו, לאהוב אותו ולירא ממנו, שהן כולן מצוות בלב בלבד, ואין משמעות לאמירתן אלא להפנמתן בלב.

בספר **אור שמח**¹⁰ מציע הסבר נוסף ומחודש: כיון שהפסוק "למען תזכור את יום צאתך מארץ מצרים כל ימי חיירך" לא נאמר בלשון ציווי אי אפשר ללמוד ממנו מצווה שתהיה אחת מתרי"ג המצוות, אך כיוון שבפסוק זה ישנו ביטוי

⁵ בספרו 'זוהר הרקיע' על אזהרות ר' שלמה בן גבירול, אות כו.

⁶ בחיבורו על הש"ס 'מרומי שדה', מסכת סוטה דף לב-ב, ד"ה 'ולי קשה'.

⁷ שמופיעה בספר המצוות, עשה י'.

⁸ בחיבורו על 'משנה תורה' בהלכות קריאת שמע שם.

⁹ בפתיחה להלכות קריאת שמע. אורח-חיים לפני סימן נח.

¹⁰ על משנה תורה הלכות קריאת שמע שם.

ברור של רצון ה' שנזכור את צאתנו ממצרים כל חיינו, לכן "תקנו אבותינו לזכור בפה מלא יציאת מצרים בכל יום, ולהודות לו על זה, וזהו השלמת רצון הבורא יתברך", ולכן החמירו בתקנה זו כדברי תורה על אף שזו אינה חובה מהתורה.

רעיון נוסף כתבו בשם ר' חיים מבריסק¹¹: כיון שהרמב"ם פסק כבן זומא שיש חובה להזכיר יציאת מצרים בלילות, ממילא נובע מכך שאין לדרוש את הפסוק כחכמים שדרשו 'כל ימי חייך' - להביא לימות המשיח. כלומר: בימות המשיח לא תהיה חובה להזכיר את יציאת מצרים, וכמו שהסבירו בגמרא¹² את דעתו של בן זומא על-פי הפסוק בירמיהו, שבימות המשיח לא יזכירו את יציאת מצרים אלא את הגאולה האחרונה.

משמעות הדבר היא שהמצוה לזכור את יציאת מצרים איננה מצווה לדורי דורות, אלא יש לה הגבלת זמן - עד ימות המשיח, והרי הרמב"ם כתב בספר המצוות בשורש השלישי ש"אין ראוי למנות מצוות שאינן נוהגות לדורות". לפי דבריו, שהרמב"ם לא מונה מצוות שלא ינהגו בימות המשיח, יוצא לנו דבר מענין: בימות המשיח לא תהיה חובה לזכור את יציאת מצרים כל יום ויום, כיון שהעיקר יהיה נפלאות הגאולה האחרונה, אך עדיין תהיה חובה לספר פעם בשנה בליל הסדר על יציאת מצרים (שאותה מנה הרמב"ם בספר המצוות) ועדיין ינהג הכלל "כל המרבה הרי זה משובח".

¹¹ ראה בספר 'פשוטו של מקרא/הרב יהודה קופרמן, מדור ג פרק 1, עמוד 343, ובהערה 79. רצה לומר שם שנביא יכול להגדיר מצוה מהתורה, ולכן לאחר שירמיהו התנבא שלעתידי לא יאמרו עוד חי ה' אשר העלה את ישראל ממצרים אלא חי ה' אשר העלה את ישראל מהגלויות – זה מגדיר שמצות זכרון יצי"מ אינה לדורות וממילא אינה בתרי"ג. וקשה לי על זה, שכן הרמב"ם בהקדמה לפיהמ"ש כתב שלנבואה אין ערך להסברת מצוות, אלא רק לסברא וככל חכם.

¹² ברכות, דף יב-ב.

Arba Banim: Everyone According To Their Level

Aryeh Zucker ~ *Migdal 5782; Far Rockaway NY*

As one reads through the questions of the Four Sons, something interesting stands out regarding the responses. For each answer corresponding to the specific child, the answers are completely different. In each answer, the father fulfills his *mitzvah* of “*higadeta levincha*” by giving over a central idea of the night. In addition to this, for each son the answer is designed in a way that is fitting for him and will give him what he needs.

For the wise son, one must appeal to his intellect, so he is told a halacha that represents a fundamental idea of the night. How is the law of “one may not eat anything after the *afikomen*” a fundamental theme of the night? One answer given is that this means to teach him **all** the *halachot* of the night through to the end of the Seder - the *afikomen*. Another possible answer is that usually people end their meal on a high note, with dessert, but on this night we don't eat anything after the *afikomen*. This demonstrates to us that the *korban pesach* is the most important part of the Seder. It shows us that contained within it are all the ideas of Pesach and the *geulah*, and therefore once you reach the climax of the Seder, there is nothing else that should be added to it.

Regarding the wicked son, one must put things in perspective for him and demonstrate the reality of the situation (“knock out his teeth”). By showing him that *Yetziat Mitzrayim* is an event led by God redeeming the nation that served Him, one demonstrates to the wicked son that if he does not accept the *mitzvot*, he would not have been redeemed.

The simple son has no unique traits that need special attention. All that is required by this son is that you fulfill the *mitzvah* of *higadeta levincha* and tell him the story of the night.

For the son who doesn't know how to ask, one must teach him how to ask questions in order for him to truly understand what's going on (here and in general). Therefore, he receives a very vague statement mentioning that God took us out of Egypt, leaving out all the details and prompting him to ask questions.

Pesach night is a night of education. Everyone must be educated in their own way, so that they may get out what they need from the night. Beyond the idea of teaching your children the story of *Yetziat Mitzrayim* in a way they can each understand, there is also an idea of teaching it in a manner that fits with who they are.

Yachol Merosh Chodesh: The Haggadah's Hava Amina

Ezra Landman-Feigelson ~ *Migdal 5782; Chicago, IL*

At this stage in the Haggadah, we begin to perform the mitzvah of commemorating Yetziat Mitzrayim. The Baal Haggadah assumes we know of the following biblical command: "And you shall explain to your child on that day, 'It is because of what God did for me when I went free from Egypt'" (Shemot 13:8). This is the source for the mitzvah of talking about Yetziat Mitzrayim, something we do for the longest part of the Seder (see Sefer HaChinuch, Mitzvah 21). The Baal Haggadah then analyzes this pasuk and questions the timing in which it can be performed: "One could have thought [the mitzvah begins] from Rosh Chodesh. It is taught [instead], 'On that day'."

It would appear that the derasha is unnecessary. Would we really have thought that one should begin to tell the story of the Exodus before the holiday set aside for it? We don't start reading Megillat Esther before Purim! Why would we think to tell the story of Pesach, not on Pesach? In other words, what is the hava aminah?

There are two mitzvot when it comes to remembering Yetziat Mitzrayim. The first is the idea of remembering the event, as it states, "So that you may remember the day of your departure from the land of Egypt as long as you live" (Devarim 16:3). This is a mitzvah which is accomplished every single day. This mitzvah simply requires a person to verbally state that the event happened. No discussion nor detail is required to fulfill this. However, there is a second, separate mitzvah, which is called Sippur Yetziat Mitzrayim. This mitzvah is done on Pesach itself. It is the mitzvah that we are doing throughout Maggid. As opposed to the first, daily mitzvah, this mitzvah requires a telling of the story with great elaboration, expansion, even of acting it out, as the Rambam states (Hilkhos Chametz Umatzah 7:1), "One is required leharot et atzmo (to act out) as if he himself was freed from Egypt."

This can explain the Baal Haggadah's hava amina. Since there is precedent for remembering Yetziat Mitzrayim not on Pesach itself, one might think that the mitzvah of Sippur Yetziat Mitzrayim begins already on Rosh Chodesh Nissan. And this makes sense, because that is when we the Jewish people began preparations to leave. Additionally, on Rosh Chodesh Nissan, God gave the first mitzvah to the Jewish people, of declaring the new moon. In a certain sense, just by having this relationship with God, we became God's people on that day. And think about it: without Rosh Chodesh, we would know when to bring the Korban Pesach or when Pesach itself starts in the first place. That's why one might have thought to do Sippur Yetziat Mitzrayim starting Rosh Chodesh Nissan - that is the beginning of the story. This is why the

derasha was necessary - the Torah emphasizes that the mitzvah begins “bayom hahu” - “on that day,” even though the story really begins earlier.

This approach might also explain the next part of this section: “If we only had ‘on that day,’ one could have thought that this means daytime [of Erev Pesach]. It is taught [instead], ‘For the sake of this.’ It didn't say ‘for the sake of this’ except when the matzah and maror are resting in front of you.”

This hava amina is also difficult to understand at the outset. What is it about Erev Pesach that we would have thought it to be a time of Sippur Yetziat Mitzrayim? Didn't we just dismiss the possibility of Rosh Chodesh on the grounds that it says “bayom hahu”? Why would the day preceding actual Pesach be a possible time for the mitzvah of Sippur?

As it turns out, there is a story that begins on Erev Pesach - it is the day when the Jews actually sacrificed the Korban Pesach. They would prepare the meat and congregate in groups to eat the meat on the night of the Seder. So one could think that since the korban is in front of him, that would be sufficient to obligate him in the mitzvah of Sippur. In the story of the slaughtering of the Korban Pesach in Shemot 12, the Torah even describes in this context the obligation of Sippur - “Moses then summoned all the elders of Israel and said to them, ‘Go, pick out lambs for your families, and slaughter the passover offering... And when you enter the land that God will give you, as promised, you shall observe this rite. And when your children ask you, ‘What do you mean by this rite?’ You shall say, ‘It is the passover sacrifice to God, who passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt when smiting the Egyptians, but saved our houses’.”

Thus, the pasuk in the next chapter that speaks of “baavor zeh,” “for the sake of this,” teaches otherwise that the korban itself is not enough - one must have the matzah and maror in front of them as well. The entirety of the story must be present, and the ones telling it over must be in full obligation mode to properly relay it. Though the hava amina is that whenever the historical story begins, our obligation to do Sippur should be activated, our conclusion is not so - it is only in the presence of all the factors, of all the mitzvot and historical circumstances in place, that the full story can be properly told.

This approach of hava aminot tells us something important about the nature of Sippur Yetziat Mitzrayim. There is no obligation without the full story in view. The story can only be said with the entire span of the Exodus before us. Sippur Yetziat Mitzrayim is not merely a commemoration - it is an experience. And so, the Torah requires these special inferences to teach one how to have that experiential moment with their children.

Mitechilah Ovedei Avodah Zarah Hayu

Yaakov Farrell ~ *Migdal 5782; Cedarhurst, NY*

“From the beginning, our ancestors were idol worshipers. And now, the Place [of all] has brought us close to His worship, as it is stated (Joshua 24:2-4), “Yehoshua said to the whole people, so said the Lord, God of Israel, ‘Over the river did your ancestors dwell from always, Terach the father of Avraham and the father of Nachor, and they worshiped other gods.’”

“Why did I take this paragraph to write about? This has nothing to do with Pesach!” That is what I first thought when I started working on this *Dvar Torah*. Look at this *pasuk*! There is no mention of Egypt anywhere! There isn’t even a mention of slavery! Is this a misprint? Even when looking at the next paragraph, there is only one brief mention of Egypt at the end:

“And I took your father, Avraham, from over the river and I made him walk in all the land of Canaan and I increased his seed and I gave him Yitzchak. And I gave to Yitzchak, Yaakov and Esav; and I gave to Esav, Mount Seir [in order that he] inherit it; and Yaakov and his sons went down to Egypt.”

What’s happening here? Why de-emphasize the central theme of the night?

However, this is really not as odd as it seems. Often, people enjoy a loud headline of a newspaper, and then immediately argue its merits without delving any further, or at least reading the article. In a similar vein, the above verses are from a chapter, and without the entire chapter, one cannot see the full context in the Haggadah. But if you just take a step back and see the chapter as whole, you will see a lengthy description of Egypt and the Exodus.

One could also ask why it is critical to mention our history of idol worship. It seems completely unrelated to Pesach, and has no obvious place in the Seder. Isn’t the point of the Seder to make us experience and empathize with how the Jewish people felt when they exited Egypt? Indeed, this is a critical part of the Seder. However, we also need to recognize is that we also started out as a nation with Avraham in the times of Terach, as idol worshipers. It’s not simply about one journey out of Egypt; rather, it is about our *entire* journey from the times of Terach and us being disconnected from God, all the way until Mount Sinai where we became close with God. One unified journey.

One could still ask, what's the point? It's not related to the core of Pesach, which is about slavery and the Exodus. If we were to just focus on that one aspect, we would be missing another dimension. To operate with tunnel vision and only focus on the physical aspect of our emancipation leaves out our spiritual redemption, which is part of the Exodus. This spiritual redemption starts with how our ancestors were idol worshippers (and there are even some *midrashim* that say that we were on an extremely low spiritual level while in Egypt as well). Leaving Egypt was another step in this spiritual redemption, but needs the context of our history of idol worship.

This is an important lesson regarding any journey or obstacle we face in life. To focus on how we just overcame is important, but to *only* think about that is problematic. It's important to not just know you overcame something, but look at how you evolved and changed for the better (hopefully) once that experience is over. To throw that out would be disappointing; the **whole** journey is the key.

Baruch Shomer Havtachato: The Brit for All Generations

Moshe Chernigoff ~ *Migdal 5782; Flushing, NY*

In *Vehi Sheamda*, the Haggadah talks about how Jews have enemies in every generation that seek to destroy us, yet we are always saved by God. Instead of beginning with the specific salvation of Egypt, *Vehi Sheamda* highlights the general relationship that Jews have with their enemies. Why does the Haggadah mention this if the Maggid is specifically a story of the redemption from Egypt?

The context within which *Vehi Sheamda* is found can help us understand this better. The turmoil of Egypt is not an isolated incident; the Haggadah is stressing the idea present in the previous paragraph, *Baruch Shomer Havtachato*, which teaches that our bondage in Egypt was no accident - it was the fulfillment of Brit Bein Habetarim. The theme of this *Brit* is that the Jews will be oppressed and strangers in a foreign land, namely Egypt. However, when Avraham is informed of this, Hashem does not tell us the name of the land explicitly. Why? Furthermore, Hashem does give us an exact count of how long the suffering will last - four hundred years. However we know from simple math that the bondage in Egypt was only two hundred and ten years! Although there are answers to this question, (for example the four hundred years started from Akiedat Yitzchak, or it was supposed to be longer but Hashem had a mercy upon us,) why not give us either the exact count or not mention the time at all?

What the Haggadah implies to us is that the *Brit* wasn't merely about Egypt - it was just the nation forming example, but rather it is a general statement on the Jews' relationship with their enemies in every generation. This would explain why Egypt is not mentioned by name in the *brit* and the date is deliberately mentioned in a way that must include other times when the progeny of Avraham had enemies out to get them.

This is further supported by the Haggadah citing the story of what Lavan did to Yaakov, in the next paragraph of *Tzei Ulemad*. That was the first real example of the *Brit Bein Habetarim*. Abarbanel, in his commentary to the Haggadah, explains exactly how this story fits the mold that was presented by the *Brit*. Namely, Yaakov and his children were "strangers in someone's land." Lavan was out to get them and God appeared to him in a dream (Bereshit 31:25) upon pursuing Yaakov and his family warning him not to harm Yaakov. We see God's direct interference as promised by the *Brit*, to defend us and ultimately save us from our generational enemies. *Vehi Sheamda* highlights that the *Brit* promises that although our enemies exist in every generation, so does God's salvation.

Vehi SheAmda

Vehi Sheamda Aharaon Dardik ~ *Migdal 5780; Madrich*

The Jewish narrative puts a collectivized twist on the classic 1983 Elton John song, because instead of “I’m still standing”, it’s actually *we’re* still standing. Jews have survived history, just as much as we have participated in it. *V’Hi SheAmda* talks about exactly this, but leaves the source of our salvation vague, saying “וְהִיא” , “And this” is what keeps us alive. Later, it talks about Hashem saving us, but it’s unclear whether the “וְהִיא” was referring to HaShem (Hashem saves us because of the “And this”), or perhaps the two are not causally related at all. To jump to conclusions here, without understanding the full nature of *V’Hi SheAmda*, would be a *cum hoc ergo propter hoc*, or the fallacy of causation.

The Baalei Mussar propose a different interpretation: “וְהִיא” is referring to the *mitzvot*, the putting into practice of our values through Torah. However, this interpretation runs into a major problem, as clearly *mitzvot haven’t* been keeping us safe. There are righteous Jews that are nonetheless persecuted, while less righteous Jews have prospered in spite of their actions. This unassuming explanation seems to bring us to the brink of one of the most difficult questions in all of Judaism: *Tzaddik V’Ra Lo*, or the classical “Why do bad things happen to good people?”

The Abarbranel on Shema talks about why the section on reward and punishment is written in the plural, not singular. He comments that, when it comes to material reward, HaShem won’t make it rain on only the fields of the righteous, but rather, it will rain or won’t rain on everyone. Therefore, throughout Tanach, HaShem’s promises for his action work collectively.

Even if we understand that adherence, or lack thereof, to the *mitzvot* would be acting on the systemic, and not individual level, we simply run into the same issue. We can offer a minor change in phrasing: Why are righteous *generations* of Jews subjected to terrible persecution and violence, while less righteous generations are allowed to prosper? How could the generation of the terrible Judean King Menashe, whom the Torah describes as being worse than the enemies of the Jews, live peacefully, when the generation of Rashi were victims of the crusades? Such comparisons are scattered throughout Jewish history, and to attempt to justify each generation’s treatment would be unbelievably presumptuous at best, and at worst, incredibly callous.

In Parshat Mishpatim, immediately after the events at Sinai, we are given our first set of *mitzvot* from HaShem. In them, HaShem gives the reasoning behind these *mitzvot*: we should be compassionate, because we know what it was like to face cruelty when we were slaves in Egypt. “You shall not oppress a stranger, for you know the feelings of the stranger, having yourselves been strangers in the land of Egypt.” (Shemot 23:9)

With this in mind, we can propose a more advanced understanding of the position of the Baalei Mussar: They knew that there is injustice in which generations live in times of peace, and which live in times of violence. The mitzvot are not what helps Jews survive *physically* every generation; rather, they are what keeps us surviving *as Jews*. Us, our fathers, and their fathers before them have faced terrible persecution. It becomes tempting to turn around as soon as we have the power or ability to do so and act the same way towards others; in other words, to go from oppressed to oppressors. The Mitzvot come to build a system that guides us to act beyond our human urges and proclivities, commanding us to act as agents and children of HaShem. The Mitzvot are an expression of our values, values that go beyond our impulses, and guide us to lives of virtue.

Now, the second half of *V'Hi SheAmda* becomes far clearer. In every generation, HaShem has promised us that he will save us from those who try to destroy us physically. But this is only the first step in surviving as Jewish people. Once the continued existence of the Jewish ethnicity is protected by our covenant with HaShem, it is up to us and our observance of the mitzvot to ensure we do not forget who we are, and where we come from. We know what it is like to face persecution and discrimination, and the great pain and scarring that it causes. We are commanded to show the world how to do better, how to *be better*. Alternatively, if we don't, then HaShem can remove our security and safety in an instant. In the same Parshat Mishpatim, He tells us the consequences of betraying our values: "You shall not ill-treat any widow or orphan. If you do mistreat them, I will heed their outcry as soon as they cry out to Me, and My anger shall blaze forth and I will put you to the sword, and your own wives shall become widows and your children orphans." (Shemot 22:21-23)

We are a people constantly facing threats. The Jewish response to this is not to rely on physical might, but to stick to our Mitzvot and trust in HaShem. We remain Jews precisely by daring to remain compassionate and just, even when we have the temptation to do otherwise. In the face of HaShem, we are powerless to care for our own safety. All we can do is adhere to the Mitzvot and values He has given us, and by doing so, define ourselves as HaShem's people.

God keeps Jewish bodies alive. It is up to us to ensure the survival of the Jewish soul.

Vayotzianu...Is the *Haggada* Really About Leaving Egypt?

Josh Weichbrod ~ Migdal 5782; Baltimore, MD

One of the things that we take for granted is that the sole purpose of the *Seder* night is to remember *Yetziat Mitzrayim*. I am here to challenge that assumption. My goal is to demonstrate a much deeper and more relatable meaning of the night.

In *Maggid*, we review the *pesukim* that talk about *Yetziat Mitzrayim* and explain each word or phrase. The last one, however, stands out:

“‘And God took us out of Egypt with a strong hand, an outstretched arm, tremendous awe, signs, and wonders’... ‘And with wonders’ - this means blood, as it says in the Torah, ‘And I will place wonders in the heavens and the earth, blood, fire, and pillars of smoke.’”

There are a couple of problems with this sequence, and I would like to offer some solutions. The first problem is a definitional error that the *Baal HaHaggada* seems to make, as he tries to prove that “wonders,” “*moftim*,” means “blood,”; the problem is that the proof shows that “*moftim*” means “blood, fire, and smoke.” It is not exclusive, not by any means. The second is that this is one of few times in this large section of the *Haggadah* that the proofs are not from the *Shemot* and *Devarim* passages that talk about *Yetziat Mitzrayim*; rather it is from the prophet *Yoel*.

Taking a deeper look into the context of “*dam va’esh ve’timrot ashan*” - the “blood, fire and smoke” - may help explain why it is mentioned here. As mentioned above, this *pasuk* comes from the book of *Yoel*. He lived during one of the two *Batei Hamikdash* (debated by historians) and was one of the twelve minor prophets. When we view the entire *perek*, we see it is talking about what will happen at the end of times (*Yoel* 3):

*“And it will be, after this, I [God] will **pour** My spirit on all flesh and your sons and daughters will prophesy, and your elderly will dream dreams, and your lads will see visions: And also to all servants and maidservants in those days, I will pour my spirit: And I will place wonders in the heavens and the earth, **blood, fire, and pillars of smoke**: The sun will be flipped to darkness and the moon to blood before the day of the great and awesome God comes: And it will be that **all that call in the name of God will be spared**, because on Mount Zion and Jerusalem there will be a remainder, just like God said, and in the leftover that God will call.”*

Let’s compare this to the first line of “*Shefoch Chamascha*”, which is sourced in *Tehillim* (79:6):

*“**Pour out Your anger on the nations that do not know You, and on the kingdoms that did not call out in Your name.**”*

There are several similarities found within the two sets of verses above. Firstly, they both refer to God pouring something onto all the people, i.e. prophecy on the good (His chosen people) and anger (death, destruction, and subjugation) on the bad, or the nations that are against the Jews. Secondly, only the ones who “called in the name of God” will survive. What is the connection between these two paragraphs?

It seems to me that the author was trying to show something hidden behind the words of the *Haggada*. As it turns out, I was not the first one to make this connection. The Talmudic-era *midrash* known as *Eicha Rabba* (4:14) mentions the idea of a common theme of pouring. It lists four *pesukim* of good pourings and four of bad ones.

The positive ones are as follows:

1. “And **I will pour a spirit** of kindness and supplication on the house of David and those that live in Jerusalem” (*Zecharia* 12:10)
2. “And it will be, after this, **I will pour my spirit** on all flesh” (*YoeI* 3:1)
3. “And also to all servants and maidservants in those days, **I will pour my spirit**” (*YoeI* 3:2)
4. “And I will no longer hide my face from them that **I will pour my spirit** onto the house of Israel says God” (*Yechezkel* 39:29)

The negative ones are these:

1. “And **He poured** out the fury of **His anger** on them” (*Yeshaya* 42:25)
2. “When **You pour Your wrath** on Jerusalem” (*Yechezkel* 9:8)
3. “Like fire, **He poured out His anger**” (*Eicha* 2:4)
4. “God finished his fury, **He poured out His anger**” (*Eicha* 4:11)

Based on my preliminary research, there is only one other relevant *pasuk* of God pouring something, good or bad, and yet the *midrash* chose these specifically. That *pasuk* that seems to be missing from the list, and which is parallel to one in *Yirmiya* (10:25), is *Shefoch Chamascha* that we say in *Barech*. It seems to be excluded because it is asking God to pour something on the non-Jews, whereas the ones from the *midrash* are for the Jews. Is there a connection that the *midrash* is making within each set of four pourings?

When analyzing the four “bad pourings”, it seems like those *pesukim* are all in reference to God destroying the first *Beit Hamikdash*. The four “good pourings” are all talking about the end of days, when *Mashiach* comes. *Shefoch Chamascha* is a bridge between pourings, as in it we ask God to “pour out his wrath” (recalling the loss of the first *Beit Hamikdash*), but on the nations (as we are longing for the *Geulah*). So, while it does not fit in the *Midrashic* categories, it is the perfect one for the *Seder*.

Following this path, we can turn to the custom of pouring some wine when we say “blood, fire, and pillars of smoke”. It would be due to those *pesukim* talking about pouring, analogous to God pouring His spirit.

If the author of the *Haggada* chose this *pasuk* from a left-field source like *Yoel*, maybe he is trying to call our attention and notice to this idea. And if this *pasuk* and the one in *Barech* are references to the times of the *Mashiach*, then maybe the theme of tonight is not only to remember the past, but to also compare this to and yearn for the times of *Mashiach*. This seems sensible, as it is really challenging for people to feel like they were taken out themselves, as this event occurred a millennia ago.

This idea was already identified by the *Pesikta d'Rav Kahana* (7:11), which is a Talmudic-era source, that connects the past Exodus and our future Redemption. It states:

“The One who punished Egypt, will punish the Edomites. Just like Egypt was punished with blood, so too it will be for Edom, as it says, ‘And I will place wonders in the heavens and the earth, blood, fire, and pillars of smoke’. Just like Egypt was punished with frogs, so too it will be for Edom...”

It continues to go through the rest of the plagues, quoting *pesukim* from the prophets mentioned in the *midrash* above concerned about the pourings. When the *midrash* refers to “Edom”, this is talking about our current exile, and their punishment is what will happen at the end of days. So we see that the *Geula Sheleima*, the complete Redemption, is directly related and comparable to the Exodus.

This still leaves us with our first question: Why does the *Haggada* choose a *pasuk* that includes “fire” and “smoke”, in addition to “blood”? The question becomes even stronger when you realize that there is a better proof, found in a *pasuk* from *Shemot* (4:21), which also refers to “blood” and “signs” in Egypt. This is the part where God tells Moshe to initially show signs to Pharaoh, including one of blood, so he can bring the Jews out of Egypt and avoid the *Makkot*:

“And God said to Moshe, ‘When you go to return to Egypt, see all the signs (מוֹפְתִים) that I have put in your hand and do them before Pharaoh...”

Turning back to *Yoel*, we might be able to see a possible answer. Looking at the following *pasuk*, where it says, “and the moon will be turned to blood” (*Yoel* 3:4), it would seem this is referring to an eclipse, and not actual blood. I think that the author of the *Haggada* was not intending for these to be proofs of what each word means; rather, each is a hint to something deeper. He chose this *pasuk* to encourage people to think about this connection between Egypt and the future. This seems reasonable, especially since right after bringing all of these *pesukim*, the *Baal HaHaggada* offers a completely different interpretation of these *pesukim*. As the *mefarshim* say, “*Lulei demistafina*”, if it were not for the fact that I am afraid to say something very radical, I might say that maybe the *seder* is essentially what will happen in the future. Maybe the reason we mention everything that happened to the Egyptians, every last detail of these verses, is because everything that we mention here will happen yet again in the future in our next Redemption.

Looking through the *Haggadah*, we can see more evidence for this approach. Starting at *Urchatz*, right after we make *kiddush* and before we do anything else in the *seder*, we wash our hands without a blessing. This is the first thing unique to the *Seder*. While the Talmud *Pesachim* (115a) states, “*Rav Oshaya said, ‘Anything that was dipped in a liquid requires handwashing,’*” we generally do not practice it nowadays, since we are less focused on *tuma* and *tahara* without the Temple. Apparently, the purpose is to prepare us for the laws of ritual purity and impurity that we will have once the *Beit Hamikdash* is rebuilt.

Soon after, we ask the Four Questions. What is interesting about this is that the first two questions are things that are directly connected to the Exodus, namely eating *matzah* and *maror*. *Matzah* is for the bread that was not able to rise as they left, while *maror* is due to their embittered lives. The last two, on the other hand, are presumably not about the Exodus. These are dipping of food twice, and leaning as we eat. Furthermore, the last two questions are not very important. We know that in the times of the Sages, they would lean and dip throughout any meal. Today, people can choose to do this any night of the year. What makes tonight different? Also, we do both sitting and leaning while eating at the *seder*, not just leaning. Someone might answer the Four Questions with the idea that tonight we act as slaves to remember the Exodus, as well as free people that we are now. However, I wonder why we consider ourselves free now. We are still in Exile, under foreign rule, and free people would lean all year round, which we do not.

As mentioned above, the first two objects mentioned in the Questions are about the Exodus. Yet the last two are about the future, when we will truly be free to serve God in His House. On top of this, what we see from here is that the physical objects that we have are the ones to tie us to the past, the Exodus, whereas the ideas, and way we conduct ourselves is for the future, and *that* is how the *seder* works. Tonight is meant to help us anticipate the future.

Continuing in *Maggid*, we have a quote from Ben Zoma where he expounds on the *pasuk*, “Remember the Exodus all the days of your life” and explains that “the days of your life” are the days, and “all” includes the nights. The *Chachomim* say that “the days of your life” are this world, and “all” includes when *Mashiach* will come. The *Tanna* who brings down the opinion *paskens* like Ben Zoma, so in our *Haggada*, it would seem there is no valid reason to include the opinion of the Sages...unless there is a deeper idea. Furthermore, this has no relevance to the *seder* at all because the commandment of the *seder* night is *sipur*, or telling the story, whereas this is *zecher*, or remembrance, which is an obligation **every** day. Therefore, we can assume they are referring to the future times of *Mashiach*, and through remembering the Exodus, we will be prepared for those days.

After this, we have the Four Sons, and I think our response to each one further buttresses the main idea. The answer to the wise son is “And you will say to him regarding the laws of the *pesach*. “We do not eat after the *pesach* an *afikoman*”. Why is he being told about a Rabbinical commandment? The response does not sit right. Presumably, being the wise son, he is preparing for the future by being told the entirety of the *halachot* which will apply again in the future. The answer to the wicked son is “Since he excluded himself from the community, he is a complete denier of faith. And you will blunt his teeth...If he was there, he would not have been

redeemed”. The reason we need to “fix” his perspective is that if he stays like this in the future, he would not, as a denier of faith, be redeemed. We respond to the simple son, “with a strong hand, God took us out of Egypt from the house of slavery”. In order to prepare him for the future, we talk about the miracles, because it would be too hard to connect him to the laws. The miracles, however, are what will interest a simple son, and get him excited for the future. With the last son, who does not know how to ask, we “open up the conversation for him, as it says, ‘And you shall tell your son on that day, ‘Because of this God did for me in his taking me out of Egypt’””. Since a child like this does not understand the laws, and is not yet at the age to connect to the miracles, we tell him what he should prepare for the future. “This” is what we are showing him, the physical objects that he can see, touch, and point to, and that is how he can relate and connect to the future.

We then recite:

“One might think [to start talking about leaving Egypt] from *Rosh Chodesh*, therefore the *pasuk* says, ‘On that day’...”

Why would we think that we should be able to start the *sipur* at the beginning of the month? We did not leave then! I would like to suggest that perhaps the question came from the Talmud *Rosh Hashana* (11a): “Rabbi Yehoshua says, ‘In *Nisan* we were redeemed, and in *Nisan* we will be redeemed””. If the connection between this Redemption and our past Redemption is as strong as presented here, we should be obligated to talk about the Exodus the entire month because we see that *Mashiach* is coming at some point in *Nisan*. Right after this, the *Haggada* asks why not while during the day? Why would we assume to say it during the day of the 14th? That is not *Pesach*, that is before *Pesach*! Maybe the rationale for this question is because we know that the Redemption is always represented by day, as *Mashiach* comes during the day. We see from the *Gemara* in *Shevuot* (15b) that “We do not build the Temple at night, as it says, ‘And in the day the *Mikdash* was stood up’. We stand it up during the day, not during the night.” The *Gemara Rosh Hashana* (30a) also says, “That it [the third *Beit Hamikdash*] will be built on the 15th [of *Nisan*] near sunset”. Again, this is during the day. The *Mishna* in *Sanhedrin* (10:3) also uses the symbol of light and day to describe the Redemption. It says:

“*The ten tribes will not return in the future, as it says, ‘And He will throw them into a different land, as this day’, just like this day goes and does not return, so too they go and do not return’, these are the words of Rabbi Akiva. Rabbi Eliezer says, “as this day’, just as this day darkens and lightens, so too the ten tribes that it is dark for them, it is destined to be light for them”*”.

We see that the Redemption is also metaphorically symbolized as day.

Near the end of the *seder*, we sing a song that is seemingly unrelated to the rest of the *seder*, the song *Adir Hu*. However, if we use our interpretation, it fits very nicely. In this song, we ascribe different adjectives to God, and end each line with, “With haste, with haste, in our days, shortly, God build, God build, build Your house shortly”. Using the *Midrash Tanchuma (Ki Sisa 13)*, we know that God is the one who will build the next *Beit Hamikdash*. In it, God says, “You

built the *Mishkan* and *Mikdash* that were like a wall. In the future, I will build the *Beit Hamikdash*, and it will be surrounded by a wall of fire..." This, too, proves that a major theme here is the building of the Third Temple. Really, each part of *Nirtzah* ends with us looking toward the future.

Now, back to "Is the *Haggada* **Really** About Leaving Egypt?". The answer is a resounding YES! We see throughout the *Haggadah* the obligation of mentioning the Exodus, and its primary place at the *seder*. HOWEVER, this seems like only the superficial theme of the *seder*. Once we look deeper, we realize that the meta-theme of tonight is the story of the future. It is at the climax of each individual section or song, when this idea of the future is mentioned. Even the end of the *seder* as a whole, *Nirtza*, we talk specifically about the future. Our job on this night is not only to remember the distant past, which is so far away now, but to bridge that to the much closer future.

Dam, V'aish, V'timrot Ashan

Sammy Tisser ~ *Migdal 5782; Woodmere, NY*

*“Before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes, I will set portents in the sky and on earth: **Blood and fire and pillars of smoke**” (Yoel 3:3).*

At this point in the *Seder*, we begin the process of reciting the names of the plagues. Most people seem to have an interesting custom, which is to pour out or drip out some of their wine during the recitation of the *Makkot*. Why do we do this? Where does this come from?

This custom is first mentioned by Rabbi Eleazar of Worms, also known as the Rokeach, who lived in the 11th century, in a Pesach *derasha* (*Derasha L'fesah*, ed. Simcha Emanuel, Jerusalem, 2006, pp. 101 and 127). In this *derasha*, he claims a person should use their finger to dip in their wine, and drip it, for a total of 16 drops (ten from the *makkot*, three from *Dam, VaEish, V'Timrotashan*, and an additional three for the acronym *Detzach Adash BeEchav*). He suggests that by doing so, we are in essence praying to God that these plagues should not happen to us.

Throughout the ages, other reasons have been proposed for this custom. There is a modern belief that the pouring represents a bit of sadness that G-d's creatures (the Egyptians) had to suffer through the *makkot* so we could be free. However, early sources actually seem to believe that the custom is actually a hope for *revenge* against our enemies. For example, Rabbi Moshe Isserles, in his *Darkei Moshe* (OH 473), suggests that the sixteen drops that we pour are a symbol of the sixteen faces of G-d's sword, something that will be wielded against His enemies in the future. What that means is for another *dvar Torah* of its own.

There are various customs regarding exactly how to get the drops out of the cup. One common custom is to not simply pour the wine directly from the cup, but to do it with one's finger. Some do it specifically with their pinky, but the Rama, in the same *Darkei Moshe* cited above, states that a person should do it with their *etzba* (index finger). He quotes that since the Shemot 8:15 describes G-d's enactment of the *makkot* as being done via the “finger of G-d”, we symbolize this with removing the wine with our finger. Since we are depicting the “finger of G-d” it would be inappropriate to use the pinky, which is the smallest of fingers. (See also *Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer* 48 on G-d's *etzba* in the context of the *makkot*.)

It is worthwhile noting that the Arizal maintained that for Kabbalistic reasons related to the symbol of the cup and of the wine, one should not use one's finger at all but simply pour the wine (see the Siddur Arizal, also quoted by the Pri Etz Chaim, *Shaar Chag Hamatzot* 7). Chabad keeps this custom in accordance with the Arizal.

While this year is the Shemittah year, next year a person has to pay attention that the wine he is using for this practice is not *kedushat sheviit*, as that would be wasting *kedushat sheviit* wine (a potential *issur d'oraita*) for a later-developed minhag (see *Shemittah 5782: A Practical Guide*, by Rabbi David Marcus). Though this is the standard approach, the Chazon Ish writes (*Chut Shani*, Hilchot Pesach 17:10) that it is actually permitted to pour or drip out even *kedushat sheviit* wine for this purpose. He writes that to take a small amount of wine from within the cup to outside the cup is not a "*pe'ula shel hefsed*," and therefore is not an issue. He does note, however, that many people are *makpid* not to drink the wine that they pour out (because, as we saw above, it represents judgment on our enemies), and in that case, it would be prohibited to do so because it is making *kedushat sheviit* wine in a sense "unusable."

There is a common saying in the Seder, "We do it that way so the kids should ask!" Perhaps the very reason we perform this strange *minhag* is precisely to get the kids to ask - and now you will be able to tell them!

God's Omnipotence

Eli Witty ~ *Migdal 5782; Toronto, Canada*

Imagine the scene. A lone boat from Tarshish is tossed on the stormy sea, the sailors calling out frantically to their gods. One passenger is found still sleeping below decks! He is brought on deck, and the sailors draw lots, to see which one called this misfortune upon them. The slumberer is found to be at fault. And when inquired who he is or what he did to cause this trouble, he begins his answer: "I am a Hebrew, and I revere the Lord, God of the heavens, Who made the sea and the dry land."

Now we must fall back even further through time. We come to Egypt, and the land is rocked by calamities. Swarms of wild beasts, hailstones, rivers turned to blood, precious livestock (the measure of wealth, in those times) killed; it seems things cannot get worse. But the Pharaoh adamantly refuses to let the Hebrews go! And it is the Hebrews whose God, their prophet Moses tells the Egyptians, has brought this upon Egypt for them having kept His people in bondage to them. What is it that finally shakes the hearts of Pharaoh's loyal courtiers that they insist he release the Hebrews, and that makes even Pharaoh himself beg Moses to remove this 'death' from upon him?

Locusts. *Anacridium aegyptium*, the Egyptian locust. A swarm of size unseen in history. But one is left wondering - locusts? After fire and ice, after rivers of blood, after wild beasts invading the cities, it's such a mundane thing, plain old locusts, that cracks Pharaoh's resistance? For that matter, in our first scenario, what sort of answer is 'Who made the sea and the dry land' to desperate sailors? Why not tell them 'Who delivered my people out of bondage' or 'Who saved His nation from the hands of enemies', something that will impress them and assure them that it is within G-d's power to rescue them from their current perilous situation?

The answer lies in familiarity. The sailors may not know of the Exodus, or of the innumerable miracles G-d performed for Bnei Yisrael throughout the ages- but it is certain they can grasp that this Hebrew's god is the One Who created 'the sea and the dry land'. Jonah addresses them on their terms, framing G-d in language that they can immediately understand. The heavens, the sea and the dry land are all G-d's, and so their problem is all within the hands of G-d.

And it is the same with the Egyptians. Rivers of blood and armies of wild beasts are not within their world. They are wonders, extraordinary events. But a swarm of locusts is terrifyingly familiar. The Egyptians do not know rains of fire and ice or agonizing boils incurable by any medicine. A locust swarm is something they can understand, and this one is larger than any, ever before. They understand exactly what it is and what it will do to their land - despoil it, waste it, set it desolate. This is why the Egyptian resistance flags almost to the complete breaking point when the locusts come: they understand it.

And think about this in relation to Pesach itself. Mention Pesach to a Jew - or Passover to a gentile - and the thought of matza can't be far away. After that comes the prohibition on bread. What could be more familiar? We restructure from the familiar, only from there launching into the holiness of the holiday, to remind ourselves once a year what miracles were once done for our forefathers that we today might live in the proper Jewish way, in freedom and piety. We can't wade straight into such sublime realizations, no more than you can open up a book on quantum physics without ever studying geometry.

The sailors of Tarshish, the courtiers of Egypt, and we here today - change comes from the familiar. It's up to us to elevate what's familiar to us, to build ourselves into a better place from the ground up. One more sefer you learn from every day, one healthy habit, one earlier minyan. If we want to be better, we have to start in the territory we know before striking out towards distant goals.

Midah Keneged Midah: The Makkot in Poetic Midah

Simon Pinter ~ *Migdal 5782; Lawrence, NY*

¹³Brilliant river
Blood flowing fast
 Boneless dynast
 Balks as die cast

Make the Jews go choke on dust¹⁶
 Sweep the streets after a gust
 Feel them gnaw you, claw and scratch
 Clouds of dust that won't unlatch

Pharaoh wanted babies' blood¹⁴
 Nile filled as if a flood
 Remnants of the kids he struck
 River filled with sanguine muck

Whirlwind angry
Wild stampede
 Wicked and freed
 Won't ever cede

Moving quickly
Frogs keep hopping
 Fast, so flopping
 Free, still sopping

Lions, tigers, bears, oh my
 Roam the woods and say goodbye
 Circus empty, go and run
 Pharaoh needs some beasts for fun¹⁷

Force a Jew to catch a bug¹⁵
 Watch them suffer, feel so smug
 Tables turned, the frogs won't end
 Croaks and screams all mix and blend

Plowing no more
Pestilent fate
 Puny, slow gait
 Putrid, lost weight

Last thing you want
Lice in your head
 Languish, they spread
 Leave your scalp dead

Push the Jews to work the field
 Beat them if they ever yield
 Beasts too good to plow the farm?¹⁸
 Watch them fall down sick from harm

¹³ The odd stanzas are trochaic diameter, the evens are catalectic trochaic tetrameter, and it has an ABBB CCDD rhyme scheme.

¹⁴ The Egyptians spilled the blood of the baby Israelite boys and threw the bodies into the Nile. Therefore, the Nile was turned into blood. (Abarbanel on Exodus 7:14)

¹⁵ The Egyptians forced the Israelites to retrieve different reptiles and insects in order to torment them. Therefore, the frogs tormented the Egyptians. (Tanna D'vei Eliyahu Rabbah, Ch. 7)

¹⁶ The Egyptians forced the Israelites to sweep the dust from their streets and shops. Therefore, all of the dust became lice. (Shemot Rabbah 10:7; Midrash Tanchuma, Va'eira 14)

¹⁷ The Egyptians forced the Israelites to hunt in the wilderness for wild beasts for the Egyptians' circuses. (Tanna D'vei Eliyahu Rabbah, Ch. 7)

¹⁸ The Israelites were forced to pull plows in order that the Egyptian animals not be overworked. Therefore, the animals died. (Haggadat Zevach Pesach, p. 112)

Bubbling up
Boils everywhere
 Broadly impair
 Brutal, can't bare

Force the Jews to work all day
 Pock your skin, won't go away
 They can't sleep so nor can you
 Feel the pain, what they go through¹⁹

Watch it descend
Hail—ice on fire
 Harvests a pyre
 Heavenly ire

Force the Jews to plant your groves²⁰
 Fiery hail with ice like troves
 Beaten crops will grow no more
 Work undone by flaming pour

Blackened day's sky
Locusts eat wheat
 Land like a sheet
 Leave no retreat

Jews were made to plant the grain²¹
 Locusts fall like singing rain
 Eat the plants, leave none behind
 No more trace of work to find

Dusk eternal
Darkness, can't see
 Don't move, can't flee
 Drowned out cruelly

Want to trap the Jews in jail²²
 Stick them 'neath an inky vail
 Stay in place then, you can't move
 Use the time to think, improve

Wailing mothers
Death of first born
 Dreaded; they mourn
 Declares God's scorn

Struck the B'nei Yisrael
 Killed them 'til there's none to quell²³
 God will come and strike you down
 Bow before His hand and crow

¹⁹ Since the Israelites did not come home from work until late into the night, they could not be with their wives. The Egyptians were struck with boils and therefore could not engage in intimacy either. (Abarbanel on Exodus 7:14)

²⁰ The Israelites had to plant all of the trees and crops and could not go home. Therefore, the plants were destroyed by the hail. (Shemot Rabbah 12:3)

²¹ The Israelites were forced to plant the grain in Egypt. Therefore, the locusts came and ate up the grain. (Tanna D'vei Eliyahu Rabbah, Ch. 7)

²² Egyptians conspired to imprison the Children of Israel. (Midrash Tanchuma)

²³ The Israelite baby boys were drowned in the Nile, so the Egyptian firstborns were killed. (Tanna D'vei Eliyahu Rabbah, Ch. 7)

R' Yosi, R' Eliezer, R' Akiva

Yonatan Beer ~ *Migdal 5782; West Hempstead, NY*

Throughout the entire text of Magid, there is only one example of a dispute amongst the Chachamim. Moreover, far from being straightforward, this dispute is esoteric and obscure. The debate is as follows:

1. Rabbi Yosse HaGlili, who says there are ten plagues, and fifty at the Red Sea. His proof is that by the ten plagues the Egyptian sorcerers remarked that the plagues are the work of the finger of God. By the Red Sea, it says the Jews saw the work of God's hand. 5 fingers per hand * 10 plagues = 50 plagues.
2. Rabbi Eliezer agrees that there were five times as many plagues at the Red Sea, but disagrees that there were only 10 plagues in Egypt. Instead, each plague was in fact four, because in Tehillim (78:49) when recounting the story of the makkot it says God inflicted his "wrath, indignation, troubles, and agents of discord", which makes $4 * 10 = 40$ plagues at Egypt and $40 * 5 = 200$ plagues at the Red Sea.
3. Rabbi Akiva has a very similar idea to Rabbi Eliezer, but he also counts God's "burning anger" to make 5 plagues per plague, and thus $5 * 10 = 50$ plagues at Egypt and $50 * 5 = 250$ plagues at the Red Sea.

This passage is incredibly strange, and many questions must be answered. Why do we care about the quantity of plagues? How do we understand the dispute as to whether there were 50, or 200, or 250? Additionally, the base assumption found in all three sides of the dispute is that the miracle at the Red Sea is of the same class as those which occurred in Egypt. However, this passage in the haggadah is the only place where the event at the Red Sea is referred to as a "plague"!

The first step is to shift from seeing numbers to seeing factors. What matters to Rabbi Akiva isn't that there were 250 plagues at the Red Sea. That number on its own doesn't have any meaning, and Rabbi Akiva doesn't have any conception of a single unit of plague which comprises the event of the Red Sea. Instead, what matters is that the 10 makkot were each composed of five parts. With this, we start to get a direction for what this dispute is truly about and why we care about the number of makkot. The dispute isn't about arithmetic; rather, it is about the nature of the plagues, their purpose and effect, and their relation to the event at the Red Sea.

Rabbi Yosse HaGlili views the plagues' utility first and foremost through their effect on those who witness them. In this conception, God acts as a King who creates a display of force to His enemies and His subjectory kingdoms as a warning. He notes, as seen in the Torah, that while both the ten plagues and the event at the Red Sea both had powerful effects on those who witnessed them, the Red Sea's effect was much greater. Perhaps it was because the ten plagues still left Egyptians standing as a threat, while the Red Sea completely decimated them; or perhaps it's because the splitting and subsequent "unsplitting" of the sea was timed precisely, exactly when the Jews were walking and then about to be destroyed. Either way, the purpose of the plagues was primarily to inflict awe upon those who witnessed them, and the Red Sea was therefore a more exemplary plague than the event at Egypt.

Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Akiva agree that the purpose of the plagues is their effect on the recipients and witnesses, but would disagree that such an analysis is sufficient to understand them. The awe that the plagues instill is not just of the might of God, but of his justice and retribution. In this conception, God is like a Judge who carries out a public execution of a convict. God demonstrates to the witnesses of the plagues that He carries out His will through the world and punishes those who do evil, exemplified when He completely destroys the Egyptian army in the Jews' greatest time of need. The manner of punishment and its publicity teach the nature and will of divine justice.

The dispute between Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Eliezer is more subtle. Rabbi Eliezer holds that God's fury is purely punitive, and He does not act with wrath or indignation except through burning anger. We see this by the fact that he includes wrath, indignation, troubles, and agents of discord all under the header of "burning anger"; to him the passage in Tehillim reads "his burning anger: wrath, indignation, troubles, and a band of agents of chaos". Rabbi Akiva instead holds that, while destructive punitive justice was surely present in the Exodus from Egypt, God sometimes inflicts punishment without the presence of anger. To him, burning anger is a separate clause from wrath and indignation, and God can inflict troubles without doing so through anger.

Thus we see that what seemed to be an obscure and unnecessary dispute about numbers reveals itself to be a framing device to discuss the nature and purpose of Divine Justice.

Hakarat Hatov In “Our” Dayeinu

Shlomo Korobkin ~ *Migdal 5782; Toronto, Canada*

The well-known song of Dayeinu, found at the end of Maggid in the Haggadah, details the miraculous journey and events that took place for the Israelites. It takes us from the redemption from Mitzrayim to the building of the Beit Hamikdash. Dayeinu goes through each step of the process and thanks G-d for being with the Jewish people and guiding them along a safe and successful path. However, even though this enjoyable and cheery tune is loved by many, we still have to ask what is the purpose of including Dayeinu? Why can we not just show our appreciation for either the whole, or focus on the momentous occasions, like Yetziat Mitzrayim? Even if we understand the purpose of this song, why can't we just include a piyut describing the miracles of Yetziat Mitzrayim, since that is the focus of the entire Haggadah? Why are we suddenly mentioning post-Egypt miracles in the Seder?

The Sifte Chaim²⁴ quotes Chovot Halevavot in buttressing our question by introducing two terms describing our profound Hakarat Hatov to G-d²⁵. The terms used are Mitzvot Sechliut (from the word “sechel”, which means “thought”) and Mitzvot Shemeiut (from the word “shomea”, which means “listening”). Mitzvah Sechliut is the foundation of gratitude to G-d, where appreciation is demonstrated in an intellectual manner. This was an obligation we had early on as a courtesy to show to our Creator. From the time of creation there was a commandment and responsibility to recognize and to teach that there is only one G-d in the world and to relate to the ongoing generations about His glory. Because the earlier generations understood that there is a Creator, they were able to perform their Hakarat Hatov by spreading and internalizing that knowledge and ensuring that future generations would continue to respect, recognize, and serve G-d. By showing a person's Sechliut and keeping the seven Mitzvot Bnei Noach, a person automatically fulfills one's Hakarat Hatov to G-d. Mitzvah Shemeiut, on the other hand, is a new level in showing appreciation to G-d. In the post-Exodus era of Judaism, when Bnei Yisrael were given a direct relationship to G-d through His miracles and Mitzvot, they were required to have a new sense of respect and recognition of G-d. This new relationship that Bnei Yisrael had with G-d was one that could not always be understood in an intellectual way. They were no longer showing G-d appreciation for the basic necessities, like air, crops, and shelter. They began a relationship that was much stronger, to the point where they did not always understand why they were doing what they were commanded (the mitzvot we refer to as “Chokim”), but they knew that since their G-d requested this of them, the commandment had to be for their benefit. In the stage of Sechliut it would have been fine to thank G-d “for everything,” without specifics, or just thank G-d for the immediate miracles at hand (Yetziat Mitzrayim). But through Shemeiut, it is appropriate that just as G-d intervened in our journey every step of the way, involving Himself in our lives throughout the story, so too we should emulate the process of G-d (imitatio dei) by studying Torah and performing Mitzvot and Avodah. We should be focusing on all the ways that

²⁴ Authored by Rabbi Chaim Moshe Friedlander zt”l (1923-1986)

²⁵ Chapter Hakarat Hatov section “foundation of Yetziat Mitzrayim”

G-d sustained us, involved Himself in our journey, and ushered us into a completely new level of spiritual connection with Him. For this, we need to take the time to show our illustrious Hakarat Hatov in detail, through the seventeen stanzas of Dayeinu.

A nice mashal to stress the above idea concerns a relationship between father and son. A father that takes care of his child expects to be treated with honor and respect. Even at a young age, the child can understand that all he is provided with comes directly from his father. The son starts to grow and mature in his understanding of what his father has provided for him in addition to the bare necessities of shelter and food (tuition, tutors, dentist bills, a comfortable lifestyle, etc.). His appreciation grows to a level of loving, serving, and caring, that would not have been if the relationship was stuck on the base level. Even if in some instances the son does not know the particular intentions the father has for his son; nevertheless, the son feels a higher obligation to listen to his father as the son has a loving bond and trust in his father.

Additionally, let us take a close look at the word Dayeinu and the piyut as a whole. Dayeinu comes from the Hebrew words “Dai”, meaning “enough” and the suffix “nu”: meaning “we” or “us”. So we see that our appreciation towards G-d is not focused from a specific perspective; rather the thanksgiving that we are reciting includes the entire B'nai Yisrael, both for their generation and for future generations. Furthermore, if someone looks at the piyut attentively, one can see that the piyut is written in a plural language to show that G-d wants to make this experience a reality. This creates an inclusiveness to the people in future generations so that they can hopefully find these types of miracles and have that same Hakarat Hatov.

May we all be zoche this year/Pesach Seder to find our own miracles and be able to recognize that Hakarat Hatov which they had in the desert, hopefully leading us to our ultimate redemption bb”a.

The Simanim and Dayeinu

Zach Kleiman ~ *Migdal 5782; Kew Gardens, NY*

The Rishonim had many different simanim to aid in remembering how to properly conduct the Seder. The classic ones we all know, “*Kadesh*,” “*Urchatz*,” etc., are generally attributed to Rashi (some attribute them to the Tosafist Rabbenu Shmuel MiPoliza). The Haggadah is a very holy book and it is therefore fitting to *darshen* it, even its simanim. To quote the Sefer HaTodaah (Book of Our Heritage), by Rabbi Eliyahu Kitov (vol. II, p. 99):

“Very many hints are found in these *simanim*. Those who are *medakdek b'mitzvot* are careful to read every *siman* at its proper place and to enunciate it out loud, just as one reads the Haggadah itself, because of the holiness of the *simanim* and the holiness of their author.”

The Sefer HaTodaah suggests that perhaps these *simanim* were designed to correspond to the *maalot tovot*, the good things for which we praise God in Dayenu, in the following way:

<u><i>Siman</i></u>	<u><i>Maalot / What we're praising God for</i></u>	<u>Comparison/Reason</u>
<i>Kadesh</i>	Taking us out of Egypt	Shemot 13:2 begins with “ <i>Kadesh li kol bechor</i> ,” “sanctify to Me every firstborn,” and the next verse (Shemot 13:3) states, “Remember this day when you departed from Egypt.”
<i>Urchatz</i>	Doing judgments against the Egyptians	Shemot 7:4 states, “And I will take them out... with great judgments,” and Shemot 7:15, “When Pharaoh goes out to the river” (with the purpose being to bathe)
<i>Karpas</i>	Doing judgments to their Gods	שפט ובאלהיהם שפט in <i>gematria</i> is 488, which is the same as כרפס-מי-מלח (<i>karpas-saltwater</i>)
<i>Yachatz</i>	Killing their firstborn	Yachatz, splitting the matzah in half, is parallel to the plague of the firstborn being done at the half-way point of the night (Shemot 12:29)

<i>Maggid</i>	Having given us their wealth	Moshe is told to tell the Israelites to ask their Egyptian neighbors for their wealth, with the language “ <i>dabber na be’aznei ha’am</i> ” (Shemot 11:2), a harsher language of “tell,” as opposed to “ <i>amar</i> .” Similarly, “ <i>maggid</i> ,” and “Haggadah” has a language that draws a person toward it, like the effect that money has.
<i>Rachtzah</i>	Having split the sea for us	As explained previously with regards to <i>Urchatz</i> . Also see “And the waters returned upon the Egyptians” (Exodus 14:28).
<i>Motzi</i>	Letting us cross on dry land	Even though the waters stood like a wall He gave us assorted delicacies there (Midrash Tehillim 114)
<i>Matza</i>	Drowned our tormentors in the sea	Just as the flour is “drowned” in the water to create <i>matza</i> , and then doesn’t rise again, so too the Egyptians.
<i>Maror</i>	Took care of our needs in the desert	That radish and horseradish did not cease from our table
<i>Korech</i>	He provided us the Manna	Because the <i>manna</i> was enwrapped in dew both from above and below like a sandwich
<i>Tzafun</i>	Having given us <i>Shabbat</i>	<i>Shabbat</i> was a hidden (<i>tzafun</i>) and stored away treasure as per Chazal (Shabbat 10b)

<i>Barech</i>	Having brought us before <i>Har Sinai</i>	Just as we learn that we should make <i>Birkat hatorah</i> from “For I proclaim the name of the Lord, give greatness to our God” (Deuteronomy 32:3) so too <i>Yisrael</i> as a whole made their first blessing when they came before <i>Har Sinai</i>
<i>Shulchan Orech</i>	Having given us the Torah	The Torah makes order of our tables through its laws of Kashrut.
<i>Hallel</i>	Having brought us to <i>Eretz Yisrael</i>	Cf. הללי אלקיך ציון (Psalms 147:12)
<i>Nirtzah</i>	Having the merit of building the <i>Beit Hamikdash</i>	The <i>Korbanot</i> we brought there and which we received approval (<i>nirtzah</i>) for atonement.

If Rabbi Kitov is correct, *Nirtzah* should correspond to the *Beit Hamikdash* and the *korbanot*. However, when reading the various poems of *Nirtzah* don't always seem to align so obviously with this correspondence. For example, what exact elements of the service in the *Beit Hamikdash* does “*Ki Lo Na'eh*” represent? I suggest you discuss this at your table.

Making The Mitzvot Meaningful

Rabbi Aryeh Sklar ~ *Alumni & Community Outreach*

As we near the end of Maggid, Rabban Gamliel appears to helpfully provide a barebones minimum of the obligation of *Sippur Yetziat Mitzrayim* for the night - the *mitzvot* of the food we have to eat, and the reasons for them. Interestingly, like the Mah Nishtanah and some other parts of Maggid, this section actually originates in the Mishna (Pesachim 10:5), and is not a late addition to the Haggadah. Many questions present themselves. Here are a few that spring most immediately in my mind:

1. Why are these foods the most important ideas to mention, of all the ideas of the night? Why not the entire story? In fact, with this, we skip over everything about Egypt, the plagues, Pharaoh. All we relate is a very general overview of the beginning of the slavery and the end - *maror* tells us our lives were bitter in Egypt, and *matzah* and the *pesach* tell us that we left Egypt free people. But nothing in between is related at all.
2. How can Rabban Gamliel say that one would not fulfill his obligation if he didn't say these words? Surely that is a *d'rabbanan* formulation, which should not affect the *d'oraita* fulfillment! This is actually part of a famous *machloket rishonim*. The Ran (on Sukkah 28a, s.v. *amru lo*) suggests that it means that the person has not fulfilled it 100% correctly - like how the rabbis want him to. Tosafot on Sukkah 3a (s.v. *deamar lecha mani*) believe that this kind of statement indicates that the rabbis indeed had the power to define the law such that if you didn't do it their way, you didn't do it God's way - and you wouldn't fulfill your obligation *at all*. These just compound the problems of the first question: Why would these three *mitzvot* be so important to Rabban Gamliel that he would feel the need to say either that you did it wrong (which he does not declare about other *d'rabbananans*), or that you didn't even fulfill it at all? Is it possible Rabban Gamliel meant something else entirely?
3. It appears that the author of the Haggadah decided to change several things from how it appears originally in the Mishna. Each instance is different, but it seems overall that the Baal HaHaggadah was concerned that the original text needed some editing to make it easier to read. The strongest example of this is the reason given for *matzah*. According to the Haggadah, the reason we eat *matzah* is that we left Egypt in haste and could not let our dough rise before God took us out. However, the Mishna is much more cryptic. All it says is that we eat *matzah* because "our forefathers were redeemed from Egypt." Apparently, the Haggadah's author thought more explanation was necessary to explain the connection (unless, of course, the author had a different *girsah*, which apparently some of the *rishonim* had). Why did he take such liberties with the text?
4. Why is this toward the end of Maggid? It should be at the very beginning - in case someone only has time for something but not everything!

I believe these questions allow us room to reinterpret what Rabban Gamliel meant, at least according to the author of the Haggadah, a person who made decisions as to how and where to include the text in the Haggadah. Perhaps Rabban Gamliel was not talking about the obligation of *Sippur Yetziat Mitzrayim* at the Seder. Instead, he was talking about the *mitzvot* of food that we are about to perform and a person's general religious obligation in doing them. A person needs to understand why they are doing what they are doing. If one eats the *pesach* without having an understanding of its meaning and reason, then he is just eating some nice barbeque. If one eats *maror* without understanding why, then he is just a masochist who enjoys bitter foods. No - to Rabban Gamliel, a person always has an obligation to understand why they do what they do, to imbue meaning in his actions. Rabban Gamliel especially is the one who requires a scholar to be "*tocho keboro*" - "his inner life like his outward actions" (Berachot 28a). If a person does the actions with no proper thinking and understanding, his *tocho* is not like his *boro*. His hands are performing actions, but his mind is elsewhere.

Therefore, Rabban Gamliel's statement is not about saying specific words, but about a religious obligation of understanding the background and history that have led us to this action we are obligated to perform, of *lilmod ulelameid*. Rabban Gamliel is saying, if you think that the *mitzvah* in itself is valuable without the history and meaning embedded in it, then you've missed out on the obligation completely. You didn't understand it or take the time to comprehend it, and you always have an obligation to do that. Even if, at the end of the day, we hold that most *mitzvot* do not need *kavanna* (although Rabbi Baruch Epstein in his commentary to the Haggadah here is convinced Rabban Gamliel held that *mitzvot* do require *kavanna*), there is still an overall obligation to study and try to understand why we do what we do, even if in the moment of performance we did not think about it.

This framework allows us to understand what the Baal HaHaggadah was thinking by adding an explanation of *matzah* beyond what Rabban Gamliel said. Although Rabban Gamliel felt that the *mitzvah* of *matzah* only needed a short explanation of the fact we left Egypt, the Baal HaHaggadah knew that in order to properly understand what this *mitzvah* is about (which is what Rabban Gamliel wanted all along anyway), the reader needed more. Thus, by adding more to Rabban Gamliel's statement, the author is actually fulfilling Rabban Gamliel's wishes for the modern reader. We might even say that Rabban Gamliel intentionally made his statement vague, to allow for this and other types of additions. Thus, the author of the Haggadah placed this statement perfectly toward the end of Maggid, allowing us to enter into the mindset properly to perform the rest of the *mitzvot* of the night.

Rabban Gamliel is emphasizing the obligation of every thinking Jew to understand the *mitzvot* we do, to intellectualize and rationalize them, to comprehend and to analyze them intently. If this is correct, then we can understand why the Haggadah and its commentaries are among the most popular and widely published *seforim* in the Jewish library. We all have an obligation to provide the explanations and commentary necessary for ourselves to understand the *mitzvot* of the night, as Rabban Gamliel would have wanted. As the *talmidim* at Migdal HaTorah understand well (as evidenced by this fantastic collection of *divrei Torah* on the Haggadah), we

should always seek to understand what we do, why we do them, and live lives fulfilling Rabban Gamliel's program of thinking, believing Jews.

Hallel

Reuben Azose ~ *Migdal 5782; West Hempstead, NY*

The *Hallel* of the Seder is preceded by an opening paragraph that begins “*Lefikach anachnu chayavim lehodot...* It is therefore our duty to thank, praise, laud, glorify, exalt, honor and revere Him who performed all these miracles for our fathers and for us.” Why do we preface Hallel with such a statement?

The Gemara (Berachot 33b) relates that excessive praise of G-d is actually not praise at all, but deprecatory instead. Were it not for the fact that Moshe utilized the terms *gadol* (great), *gibbor* (mighty,) and *nora* (awesome) with reference to G-d, along with the *Anshei Keneset Hagedolah* incorporating them into our *tefilot*, we would never have been allowed to say them ourselves in prayer. Our limited power of formulating thoughts of G-d’s wondrous ways and converting those thoughts to words could not possibly encapsulate the proper, requisite measure of fulfilling praise to G-d. The Gemara brings an example of a king who possesses many thousand talents of gold, and yet people praise him for his silver. This is the meaning of the statement in Tehillim (65:2), “To You, silence is praise”; that is to say, the praises of which G-d is worthy are so great and so beyond the realm of human comprehension, that we could not possibly properly articulate them through our poor power of speech. The acknowledgement of this idea by keeping silent, itself, is a vehicle of praise.

Rav Yisrael Yaakov Algazi, in his *Sefer Neot Yaakov* (55a), suggests that it is for this reason that the author of the Haggadah states, “*Lefikach anachnu chayavim lehodot...*” Despite the propriety of normally being judicious about our praises to G-d, we are nevertheless compelled to praise him on Pesach night. After recounting the Exodus story, the magnificent and extraordinary miracles that He performed for us are so overwhelming and personally moving, that the only appropriate human reaction is to extol Him, however we are capable, for having granted our salvation.

This idea also helps explain a peculiarity with regard to Hallel recited at the Seder. Normally, Hallel is recited in a formal setting in the synagogue, and is preceded by a blessing. There is also an element of “*berov am hadrat melech*” with Hallel - that the more people who participate in Hallel, the greater the expression of praise. Yet here, the Hallel is said in the privacy of one’s home, with no blessing. Rav Yosef Dov Soloveichik believed that the nature of Hallel at the Seder is different than a regular Hallel, in that it is presented as a natural, spontaneous

extolment that emanates from the realization of the personal benefit of G-d's redemption of *Bnei Yisrael* from Egypt. To put it in "Brisker" terminology, whereas normally the *mechayav* (impetus) for standard Hallel is the *kedushat hayom* (sanctity of the day), here with respect to Hallel of the Seder, the *mechayav* is the state of the *gavra* (individual) when he engages in *sippur yetziat mitzrayim* (the Exodus story) on the night of Pesach. From a temporal perspective, the opportunity to fulfill the recitation of the typical Hallel is available any time the *kedushat hayom* is still present. However, with Hallel of the Seder, there is no time to work out formalities, so to speak, for the moment demands an extemporaneous bursting forth of praise.

From this idea we can draw an important lesson. Very often, when we attend the Seder, the text becomes familiar to us and the meaning of the Haggadah loses its significance. To counter this human tendency, the introductory paragraph to the *Hallel* serves to reinforce our feeling of awe and gratitude toward Hashem for having brought about our salvation.

Birchat Maggid: A Unique Category of Blessing

Rabbi Dr. Dvir Ginsberg ~ *Rosh HaYeshiva*

The Magid section of the Haggadah is truly the heart of the entire evening, where the riveting story of the miracles and redemption is told in a unique format. After completing the story from degradation of our people to the exalted status brought about through redemption, we are required to recite the first two paragraphs of Hallel. The Magid section then comes to an end with the following blessing:

“Blessed are You, God, our God, King of the universe, who has redeemed us and redeemed our fathers from Egypt... Blessed are You, God, who redeemed Israel.”

The question raised by many is what is the classification of this blessing? As we know, the blessings enacted by the Sages have specific categorical assignments. There are blessings for enjoyment, such as those recited prior to food. There are blessings for commandments and blessings of praise and gratitude. What would be the cataloging here?

The Orchot Chaim (Hilchot Leil Pesach 21) lays out what would seem to be the easiest categorization. The blessing enacted by the Sages has the same character as that of “*sheasa nisim*”, the blessing we recite on Chanukah (when lighting candles) and Purim. (Why we do not actually recite the text of that blessing at the Seder is taken up elsewhere)

Shibolei Leket offers a different, and more problematic, explanation (Kineged Arba). He claims this blessing should be classified as a blessing for a commandment; in this case, the commandment is the telling of the story of the Exodus. There happens to be a far-reaching debate among many important Jewish thinkers as to why the Sages did not require us to recite a blessing prior to the beginning of the Haggadah (or at least the Magid section). Per Shibolei Leket, the requirement for this blessing is fulfilled at the end of the section recounting the Exodus.

We must ask how this blessing can operate in its predesigned function? Why is it such a big deal to have the blessing not take place in the beginning? We must raise the concern of how this blessing’s position seems to violate a rule that applies to blessings set up for commandments. These blessings must be recited prior to whatever action is to be performed. For example, one recites the blessing concerning the picking up of the Lula, and then picks it up. In this instance, the blessing is being recited after the commandment has been completed. How is this acceptable?

Finally, when we turn to the words of Rambam, we see a very strange conception of the blessing. In Hilchot Chametz U’Matza (8:5), he reviews the order of the Seder night. After completing the review of the..., he explains how we recite “*leficach*”, followed by the first two chapters of Hallel. We then end with the blessing of redemption as noted above.

Thus, in reading Rambam carefully, the blessing is not directly related to the section of Magid. Rather, the blessing was created as a conclusion to the Hallel. This is certainly an odd conception of how this blessing is being categorized. We only recite the initial two chapters of Hallel, saving the majority for after the meal. Why would the “mere” recitation of these two paragraphs require its own blessing?

The first opinion offered by Orchot Chayim is quite intuitive, and a precedent of sorts exists with the recitation of “*she’asa nisim*” during the lighting of the candles on Chanukah. The common practice is to recite all the blessings associated with the lighting of the candles prior to the action of lighting. However, when we look to Masechet Sofrim, we see a subtle difference in practice. One should make the blessing concerning lighting the candles prior to the action of lighting. However, once one has completed the act of lighting, only then does someone recite “*she’asa nisim*”.

This formulation indicates the need for something experiential to precipitate the requirement for the blessing of “*she’asa nisim*”. Seeing the candles, where a person has a chance to reflect on the great victory over our enemies, demands a formal response. In a similar vein, Orchot Chayim is pointing to the experiential aspect of the recounting of the Exodus as the basis for reciting the blessing at the end of the Magid. Learning about the miracles and subsequent redemption, to the point where one is “*obligated to see himself as if he had left Egypt*”, raises the entire Magid to a unique experiential process. The completion of this process must end with a blessing of praise, and this is achieved through the final blessing.

How do we answer the above questions if, in fact, this blessing is for a commandment? One of the critical ideas of the Seder experience is the notion of spontaneity and discovery. The words of the Haggadah serve as a guide for those exploring the unique ideas and concepts of the story of the Exodus. The night is filled with back and forth between the participants, and the story follows a general thematic process, carrying us from the darkest times to the redemption from Egypt. Throughout it all, a sense of an informal exploration should be internalized by all present. As such, a blessing before or during the learning (and not recitation) of the story would create a formal structure that would take away from its expected informal nature. Thus, placing the blessing at any place prior or during the story would create an environment not conducive to the overall objective. However, it would be inappropriate to fail to acknowledge this experience as a Torah based commandment, as the blessing for commandments was instituted as part and parcel of all commandments. We therefore wait until the completion of the story part to now recite the blessing.

Finally, there is the blessing, per Rambam, functioning as the completion of Hallel. One could ask why is there any Hallel at all at the end of Magid? Why not just wait and recite the complete Hallel during its “normal” placement in the Seder night? After learning about the incredible story of the Exodus, one should be naturally moved to offer tremendous praise and gratitude to God. Hallel was the prayer set up as the vehicle for this objective. It would be inappropriate to not offer this avenue for the participant. In other words, while the entire Seder experience requires a Hallel (as said later), this particular part of the Haggadah has its own separate requirement for

(some) Hallel. Yet the Hallel is incomplete, a recitation of just the first two paragraphs. Rather than a person relate to the recitation as paragraphs of Psalms, one must see them as fulfilling the institutional requirement for Hallel. Therefore, according to Rambam, the blessing must come at the end of the recitation. The indication to the participant is that he has recited the Hallel prayer as instituted by the Sages.

May we merit to experience the Final Redemption speedily in our days.

The Duality of Matzah

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We all know the reason we eat matzah tonight - it's to commemorate that the Jews who left Egypt didn't have time to let their dough rise before they left. We say it in Maggid and quote Shemot 12:39: "And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough that they had taken out of Egypt, for it was not leavened, since they had been driven out of Egypt and could not delay; nor had they prepared any provisions for themselves." And we're told earlier in the chapter (Shemot 12:34), "So the people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneading bowls wrapped in their cloaks upon their shoulders."

However, it appears that this cannot be the whole story with matzah, because there is a pretty obvious contradiction. We know that the Jews ate matzah with their Pesach lambs the night before they left Egypt, as Shemot 12:8 states, "They shall eat the flesh that same night; they shall eat it roasted over the fire, with matzah and maror." So how can it be that the reason for matzah is because Jews didn't have time to bake bread before leaving, when God explicitly commands them to eat matzah in Egypt with the Pesach offering?

Perhaps there are two symbols baked into the matzah we eat at the night of the Seder. One is the "Bread of Affliction," which we are told about already in Ha Lachma Anya. This is the hard and tough bread our enslaved ancestors had to eat in Egypt. But there is another symbol in the matzah, which is "Bread of Freedom." This is the bread we ate when we left Egypt, and hurriedly so. Ironically, it is the same kind of bread of the slave as it is for the quickly running recently freed Jewish men and women.

This explains why we have differing accounts of the reasons for the mitzvah of matzah. As it turns out, we eat the matzah for two different reasons - not only to remember our enslavement, but also to remember our freedom. The matzah eaten with the Pesach offering that first night was the bread of the enslaved - it's all they had, it's all they knew. In a way, it would have been a therapeutic feeling for them to eat that matzah with the Pesach, knowing that it would be their last time having it as slaves. We know it was truly a "Bread of Affliction," because God commanded them (Shemot 12:8) to eat the maror at the same time as the matzah, a bitter herb that is meant to remind us of the bitterness of our slavery in Egypt. Meanwhile, the matzah that they didn't have time to bake is the "Bread of Freedom." After all, that was what they made when they left Egypt! They were in such a hurry to leave and free, their dough did not have time to rise.

The question becomes obvious. How can matzah at the Seder mean two opposite things? What is the necessity of this contradiction that we reenact? I believe the answer is that we need both freedom and affliction at the same time. Freedom in a vacuum isn't freedom. Freedom is in the recognition that there is such a thing as affliction, and that the person is free from that affliction.

Without something to compare the freedom to, there is no sense of how free a person really is. With both concepts together, a person gains perspective and scale.

The converse is also true: only with a concept of freedom can a person actually feel afflicted in slavery. A person who grows up only knowing slavery does not understand his lack of freedom. The Rav, Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, talks about this in his essay entitled, "Prayer, Redemption, and Talmud Torah." He writes that animals do not suffer. They only feel pain. He writes, "Suffering is not pain. Though colloquially the two words are used as synonyms, they signify two different experiences. Pain is a natural sensation, a physiological reaction of the organism to any kind of abnormality or tissue pathology... Pain, as an instinctual reaction, is immediate and non-reflective. As such, it is not restricted to humans: the beast is also exposed to and acquainted with pain. Suffering or distress, in contradistinction to pain, is not a sensation but an experience, a spiritual reality known only to humans... Whenever a merciless reality clashes with the human existential awareness, man suffers and finds himself in distress." The Rav believes that man is unique in having the capacity for suffering, because man has the concept of freedom and good. When a person's experience clashes with this, it creates distress and suffering (and he says, the only way out is to express it through acts of recognition such as prayer and study).

So, when we eat matzah, we gain a full perspective. We were slaves. That was a time of extreme suffering, eating dry matzah and barely staying alive. And we know this was really bad because we are now free, eating the matzah symbolizing that exodus from Egypt and the freedom it represents.

Gebrochts and Korech - Minhag and Meaning

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There is a custom among some that, at the time of *korech*, the *maror* is as dry as possible to avoid liquid from touching their *matzah*. This concern is known as “*gebrokts*”, and merits an analysis.

The *minhag* of *gebrokts* is colloquially defined as the mixing *matzah* with liquids. Often, people think the concern is related to uncooked flour in the *matzah* that can become *chametz* if placed in liquid. In truth, this is not the original concern in the evolution of the *minhag*.

This is evident from the earliest mention of a case of *gebrokts*, found in the *Gemara* (Pesachim 41a): “One can fulfill his obligation of *Matzah* with wafers that have been soaked in water”. Thus, Chazal were not concerned about *gebrokts* being an issue of *chametz en potentia*, which ensures that one can never view *gebrokts* an *issur min hadin*.

The next instance of this *minhag* appears in the work of the *Ra’avan*, an early *Rishon*. He writes that people would make *matzah* farfel, endorsing it as completely acceptable. He does point to some people being more stringent, but only on the first night. Why? Due to the fact it is what one’s parents had done. They thought their parents were concerned about the *matzah* becoming *chametz*, which, he insists, is never the case. The *Ra’avan* says the reason for the apparent stringency was because they wanted to avoid corrupting the taste of the *matzah* in their mouth during the *seder*. He concludes that maybe we should be stringent. If we permit them to make farfel out of *matzah* meal, they might make the same farfel out of real flour. He thus forbids *gebrokts*.

Moving along, we see an interesting story mentioned in *The Kneset Hagadola*, an *Acharon*. There was a *Talmid Chacham*’s wife, who used *matzah* meal as a flour substitute to fry her fish on Pesach. A neighbor came and saw her frying fish in what she presumed was flour. So, of course, the next day the neighbor fried her fish in flour. Her husband returned home and, seeing her frying fish in flour, asked why she was using flour to fry fish. Her response pointed to the wife of the *Chaham*. He ran over to the *Chacham*’s house to ask if it was true; the *chacham* answered that this was not the case, as she had been using *Matzah* meal. *The Kneset Hagadola* says that the *Rabbonim* heard what happened and decided to be stringent due to *Maarat Ayin*.

The *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* takes a different, yet more familiar, approach to *gebrokts*. He comments that much of the *matzah* in his time had a lot of extra flour on it due to insufficient kneading. He wonders no *poskim* ever brought up the issue. He answers that in the days of the *Rishonim* they were a lot more careful in the process of making *matzah*, and spent more time doing it properly. Nowadays, people are in a rush to complete it in under 18 minutes, which

raises the probability of excess flour due to hasty kneading. The *Shaarei Teshuva* says that the *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* is referring to Yemenite *matzah* and cites another place where the *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* says that you cannot make *matzah* more than one handbreadth thick; this is only a problem concerning Yemenite *matzah*. He says that in Yemenite *matzah* there is a higher likelihood of excess flour or it not getting fully cooked, which could explain the origins of the *minhag*. He also explains that people would grind the Yemenite *matzah* into *matzo* meal, which might contain flour and uncooked dough. Adding this to water might make it *chametz*, which would explain the early stringency.

If this indeed is the case, one must ask: why would those who consume *Ashkenazi matzah*, which are super thin and cracker-like, still be stringent regarding *gebrokts*? The *Shaarei Teshuva* concludes that even for the most stringent people of today it would not make sense for them to be concerned about *gebrokts*, since *Ashkenazi matzah* is fully cooked.

We see three different rationales presented for this *minhag*. While one should never minimize a *minhag*, it is critical to analyze any practice of halacha and ensure it is reasonable in its applications. Does *gebrokts* meet that standard?

Shulchan Orech

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We have now finished eating our *matzah* and *maror*. We can finally sit down for a delicious meal. Shulchan Orech is basically eating the *Seudat Hachag* like we eat every *Shabbat* or *Chag*. However, when we look into the structure of how it was formulated many questions arise. The first question is, why was it placed at this particular point in the *Seder*. We started saying *Hallel*, we paused in order to eat the *mitzvot* of the night, and then we returned to *Hallel* after *Birkat Hamazon*. Although breaking up *Hallel* for the *mitzvot* of the night is a discussion in itself, why is it necessary to eat an entire meal prior to the conclusion of *Hallel*? Wouldn't it seem more reasonable to first complete the *Hallel* and then partake of our meal? Second, the Rambam writes (*Hilchot Chametz U'Matza* 7:7) that everything we eat or drink throughout the night should be eaten or drunk in the reclining position. Why is this so important? It seems to be our regular *Yom Tov* meal that we are accustomed to have on every *chag* eve. Furthermore, when we eat our *chag* meal the following day we do not have the obligation to recline! Finally, the Rambam writes (ibid. 8:9) that after eating the *matzah* and *maror*, we eat our *seudah*, "and we can eat and drink all we want.". Why does the Rambam need to mention this? Why would one think we cannot eat whatever we like?

The Ran in *Pesachim* discusses if one should make a *bracha* on the *Hallel* we say during the *Seder* night and the concerns of having a *hefsek* in the middle of *Hallel*. He writes that when one is involved in a *mitzvah* and is *mafsik* for another *mitzvah*, this doesn't disqualify the original *mitzvah*. The Ran explains that since the Haggadah was set up in this order, with the meal in the middle of *Hallel*, it doesn't invalidate the *bracha* that was originally made on *Hallel*. The question still stands: why would the author of the Haggadah insist on having a meal in the middle of *Hallel*? The Ran makes one more point and that is: since the reciting of *Hallel* is on the eating of the *Korban Pesach* as well as eating of the *matzah*, it is therefore understood that the *seuda* will not invalidate the *bracha*. The question still remains however, understandably the *Korban Pesach* and eating the *matzah* will not invalidate the *bracha* of *Hallel* but why would the *seuda* not invalidate the *bracha*? What important *mitzvah* is the obligation to eat a *seudah* at this particular point?

Rav Soloveitchik introduces a novel idea regarding the *seudah* on the night of Pesach. Rav Soloveitchik points out that the *mitzvah* of *matzah* and wine is actually part of the *mitzvah* of *seudah*. For this reason, the Rambam tells us you need to recline during the meal. The Rav holds that reclining is not a *halacha* in the *matzah* or the wine, but rather a *halacha* in the *seudah* itself. Therefore you need to recline not only for the *matzah* part of the meal, but for everything else you eat in the meal as well. This also explains why the Rambam tells us that when eating the meal "we can eat and drink all we want." The Rambam is telling us that the halachic *seudah* of the night does not consist only of the particular *mitzvot* that we are told to eat and drink, but of any additional food that we desire to eat is also part of the *mitzvah* of the evening *seudah* and therefore requires reclining.

With this idea we can also understand the Ran when he says since there's an obligation to say *Hallel* on eating the *Korban Pesach* and *matzah*, the meal itself is no longer considered a *hefsek* in *Hallel*. Seemingly the Ran holds as well that the *mitzvah* of eating the *Korban Pesach* is also part of the *mitzvah* of *seudah*. In essence, the *mitzvah* of *seudah* is what allows the *Hallel* not to be considered as having a *hefsek* in the middle.

Rav Rimon, in his *sefer* on the Haggadah, takes up these issues and adds the following. The *seudah* itself was put in the middle of *Hallel* for the purpose of making the *seudah* into a *seudat hodaya*. It's not the regular meal we normally have, but a meal that is defined as giving thanks to Hashem for all the miracles he has done for us.

May we be *zocheh* to recognize Hashem's miracles and give the proper praise at all times.

Birkat HaMazon: Mitzvah for Everyday & the Seder

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Some components of the Seder are unique to Pesach; others are daily commandments that integrate into the unique experience of the night. All bread, or matzah-based, meals require *Birkat HaMazon*, Grace after Meals, and recitation of those blessings over wine is standard. Yet, despite its pedestrian character, the Mishnah (*Pesachim* 10:7) identifies the drinking of this glass over these blessings as part of the Seder. While this may be a technicality, the themes of these blessings are interwoven with the lessons of the Exodus and thus thematically deserve their place in the Seder.

The Talmud (*Berachot* 20a) notes that these blessings are of biblical origin, a rarity among blessings. While the text need not be uniform, several themes must be mentioned to fulfil the obligations. (*Berachot* 48b-49a) These points highlight the significance of the lessons of *Birkat HaMazon*. The obligation is derived from the following verse:

“And you shall eat, and you shall be stated, and you shall bless Hashem your G-d for the good land given to you.” (Devarim 8:10)

As the subsequent verses indicate, this is not a mere expression of gratitude. Rather, thanking G-d protects from the hubris that comes from wealth, a danger that the Jews face as G-d showers them with beneficence in the Land of Israel. In turn, this can lead to forgetting G-d, culminating in the belief that all we have is because of “My own power and the might of my own hand have won this wealth for me.” (*Devarim* 8:17, JPS). To prevent this, the Torah warns:

“Take care lest you forget your G-d and fail to keep the divine commandments, rules, and laws which I enjoin upon you today. When you eaten and been sated, and have built good houses and lived in them, and your herds and flocks have multiplied, and your silver and gold have increased, and everything you own has prospered, beware lest your heart grow haughty and you forget your G-d...” (ibid 11-13 [first half], adapted from JPS)

What memory can we draw upon to avoid the pitfalls of wealth? The verses continue with the answer. The key is to remember a time when we were not as lucky, not as wealthy, and our dependence on G-d was clearer. Specifically, we remember the Exodus from Egypt and the subsequent forty years where G-d miraculously sustained us in the desert. Hence, the verses continue that we remember our G-d

“who freed you from the land of Egypt, the house of bondage; who led you through the great and terrible wilderness with its seraph serpents and scorpions, a parched land with no water in it, who brought forth water for you from the flinty rock; who fed you in the wilderness with manna, which your ancestors had never known, in order to test you by hardships only to benefit you in the end...” (ibid 13-16)

Rav Samson Rafael Hirsch (16) notes that liberty can make one forget how hopeless we once were, and thus we invoke the slavery in Egypt to remind us of those hard times. Mentioning the Exodus underscores that even when we are successful, and G-d's aide is hidden in nature, He is still there. As Ramban (end of Bo) notes, the open miracles remind us of the miraculous essence of nature itself.

Thus, the standard text of the second blessing specifically invokes the memory of Egypt: *"We thank you Hashem our G-d, for you bequeathed to our fathers a desirable, good and ample land, and because you brought us out, Hashem our G-d, from the land of Egypt, and redeemed us from the house of bondage..."*

Avudraham (on *Birkat HaMazon*) adds a dimension and writes that the juxtaposition of Israel and Egypt alludes to the following verse: *"And I have declared: I will take you out of the misery of Egypt to the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, to a land flowing with milk and honey."* (Shemot 3:17)

Thus, recognition of the abundance in the Land of Israel is highlighted by contrasting our current blessing with the state from which G-d extricated us.

Taken together, the invocation of Egypt in *Birkat HaMazon* accomplishes at least three goals:

1. It prevents hubris and the forgetting of G-d that it entails by pointing towards a time when we were less fortunate.
2. Remembering the miracles of the Exodus and the years in the desert reminds us that G-d is ultimately responsible for all we have, whether He shows His hand openly or not.
3. Contrasting our current success with our lowly past shows the extent of G-d's kindness.

Thus, while *Birkat Hamazon*, and the glass of wine that accompanies it, are not unique to Pesach, the lessons are *Birkat Hamazon* are intertwined with those of the slavery in, and Exodus from, Egypt. Thus, the integration of this mitzvah into the Seder is proper and demands that the messages of Seder night be remembered every time we eat, enjoy our success, and thank G-d for His constant presence in our lives.

Shefoch

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Toward the end of the Seder, we say the short prayer of *Shefoch Chamatcha*, in which we ask Hashem to pour out his wrath on the nations that do not know Him. This prayer is unusual: why are we praying for the downfall of the other nations? Granted, throughout history Jews have been oppressed by other groups and nations who did not believe in our God. It may even be correct to say that these sinful nations deserve to be punished. However, would it not be a better solution to have those nations learn about God, leading them to stop sinning?

Throughout the story of Pesach, while the Jews were being oppressed by the Egyptians, God, through Moshe, took a very different approach. The people who enslaved the Jews were certainly deserving of all the punishment they received. Yet, they were given several opportunities to change their ways without having God “pour out all of his wrath” upon them. Before every plague, Moshe was sent to give Pharaoh a chance to let the Jewish people go. Seemingly, God did not want to bring punishment upon them, and would have let them all live had they repented. Why, then, are we praying for retribution rather than repentance?

Additionally, upon exiting through *Yam Suf*, the Jews sang a song of praise to God. This was not seen as the best response, which is a reason offered as to why we do not say the complete Hallel on the last day of Pesach. Despite what the Egyptians had done, Jews are not supposed to be rejoicing over another nation’s suffering and death. In *Shefoch Chamatcha*, we are seemingly reinforcing this attitude, calling out to God in the hopes that He destroys our enemies.

The Gaon of Vilna states that it is not our higher hope that the wicked suffer; rather, that the righteous prevail. The righteous can not prevail until the wicked are consumed, or perhaps more correctly, until wickedness is eradicated and the wicked perform *teshuvah*.

One can look at this as a prayer not so much for vengeance, but more as a restoration of the proper equilibrium, where good rules over evil. To that end, we take an approach similar to the approach we take with Amalek. Yes, the ideal would be that evil is eradicated in a peaceful way, with people choosing good over evil. But if that isn’t achieved (and we are asking for it implicitly by not praying for the “death of the non-Jews”, but by specifically singling out those “who do not know you and the nations that do not call out in your name”), we have no choice but to call for their destruction. In the end, good cannot tolerate the presence of evil.

Beyond Seder Night: Ki L'Olam Chasdo

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Seder night, getting late. We have recited in loving detail the story of redemption from bondage and idolatry. We have spoken of the korban pesach, matzah, and maror, and then eaten them (or their symbolic equivalents). We ate the meal and imbibed three cups of wine. We have just finished, or are on the cusp of finishing, the standard version of Hallel. We should be done with the Seder at this point - or so we might think. After all, what is the purpose of Seder night, if not reliving Yetziat Mitzrayim, and giving thanks for the miraculous salvation that we have vicariously undergone?

But the Haggadah doesn't quite think we're done. We follow Hallel proper with two sections - the chapter of Tehillim (136) containing the refrain "Ki l'olam chasdo" (which I will henceforth call by its opening word, "Hodu," for brevity's sake), and Nishmat Kol Chai - which the Gemara identifies by the names of Hallel HaGadol (the Great Hallel) and Birkat HaShir (the Blessing of the Song), respectively. (There is a difference of opinion about what precisely constitutes these two sections of the seder, but I will not be addressing that machloket as part of this brief essay.) With the major themes of the Seder covered, what is the purpose of their inclusion? Furthermore, the Gemara suggests that the presence of Hallel HaGadol eclipses the need for Hallel proper. Shouldn't it be the other way around?

What's so special about these additions to the Seder?

At first glance, Hodu appears to bring very little that is new to our Seder. It is a twenty-six verse litany of God's salvation, stretching from the creation of the world, to leaving Egypt, to the conquest of Ammon and Moav. Yet the Gemara (Pesachim 118a) fixates on its penultimate verse - *noten lechem lechol basar, ki l'olam chasdo* - and holds that its primary theme is sustenance:

"Why is this section called the Great Hallel? Rabbi Yoḥanan said: Because [this passage states that] the Holy One, Blessed be He, sits in the heights of the universe and dispenses food to every creature. Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said: These twenty-six [mentions of the word] "hodu", to what do they correspond? They correspond to the twenty-six generations that the Holy One, Blessed be He, created in His world, and to whom He did not give the Torah. And [they survived only because God] sustained them through His mercy."

The Gemara goes on to elaborate that the reason for citing the prior miracles, such as kariat yam suf, in Psalm 136, is that G-d's providing us with sustenance is at least as difficult as any of them.

Are these sentiments concerning Hallel HaGadol echoed by its successor, Birkat Hashir? Nishmat Kol Chai is not discussed further in Pesachim, but an excerpt of it appears in two parallel passages in Taanit and Berachot, concerning the beracha that one says over rain:

“The Gemara asks: What blessing does one recite over rain? Rav Yehuda said that Rav said: We thank you, O Lord our G-d, for each and every drop that You have made fall for us. And Rabbi Yochanan concludes the blessing as follows: If our mouth were as full of song as the sea, and our tongue with singing like the multitude of its waves, etc. And one continues [with the formula of Nishmat Kol Chai] until: May Your mercy not forsake us, O Lord our G-d, and You have not forsaken us. Blessed are You, O Lord, to Whom abundant thanksgivings are offered.” While the Gemara in Berachot continues with a lengthy discussion of the proper way to end the beracha and the circumstances under which it should be recited, the Gemara in Taanit segues into commentary on the greatness of a day of rain, comparing it to the Resurrection of the Dead and the day on which the Torah was given - comparisons to miraculous events which mirror the ones above, in Pesachim!

It would seem that we include these sections of Hallel HaGadol and Birkat HaShir as a reminder that the mundane miracles of sustenance and rain are no less important than the spectacular miracles of yetziat mitzrayim which we have discussed all night – that the magnificent and the ordinary must each receive their due praise. This idea is given further reinforcement by the comparisons found in Taanit and Pesachim, between rain-and-sustenance and the magnificent miracles of Jewish history. But if that’s the case, why place these at the end of the Seder, following Hallel proper, instead of interspersing these notions throughout? Why should Hallel HaGadol and Birkat HaShir - themes of sustenance and rain, as understood by Chazal - be among the last thoughts that echo through our minds as Seder night draws to a close? The answer may lie not in the Seder night itself, but in what comes after. Macharat HaShabbat - the sixteenth of Nisan - plays host to two significant events. The first is the culmination of an entire year’s agricultural labor as marked by the Korban Omer (and the ensuing switch from chadash to yashan), and the second is the start of the seven week count towards Shavuot and the bringing of bikkurim to the Beit HaMikdash - an act accompanied by the recitation of Arami Oved Avi, the very passage on which we expounded earlier in the night.

This juxtaposition of the beginning of a new agricultural cycle to the end of Seder Night shows us that as fundamental as it is to remember and give thanks for the grand miracles that shaped our history, a simple telling over on the anniversary of our redemption is not enough. We have to go beyond Seder night - beyond just being the people who were redeemed long ago in a singular, spectacular, manner – and reach the point where Sippur Yetziat Mitzrayim is not just our founding narrative but that which drives us to move forward as a nation: to plow and to sow, to beg God for rain and then cry out in joy when it falls, and at last, after months of hard work and patience and dwindling stores, to reap the fruits of our labor, and wave our sheaves in gratitude.

As the Seder draws to a close, we thank God not only for a moment of salvation, but also for an eternity of partnership.

Ki l’Olam chasdo.

Rambam's Unspoken Polemic Against Adir Hu

Rabbi Aryeh Wasserman ~ *Director of Student Life*

The song Adir Hu made its debut into the mainstream text of the Haggadah in relatively modern times - first appearing with the printing of the Prague Haggadah in 1526. This piyut of unknown authorship is mentioned by the Magen Avraham in passing as being recited as early as the thirteenth century by Rabbi Meir Rothenburg, one of the prominent Baalei Tosafot. (Magen Avraham 680:2). Not much has been written about this song though - in contrast to its more popular friends in the Nirtzah section, such as Chad Gadya or Echad Mi Yodea, but if we look at the text carefully there is much to be questioned regarding the counter halachic claims the author seemed to be proposing.

The verse sections of the song delineate various praises or descriptions of Hashem, depicting His unbelievable greatness following the order of the Aleph Bet. Let us look at a familiar gemara:

"The Gemara relates that a particular individual descended before the ark as prayer leader in the presence of Rabbi Chanina. He extended his prayer and said: God, the great, mighty, awesome, powerful, mighty, awe-inspiring, strong, fearless, steadfast and honored. Rabbi Chanina waited for him until he completed his prayer. When he finished, Rabbi Chanina asked him: Have you concluded all of the praises of your Master? Why do I need all of this superfluous praise? Even these three praises that we recite: 'The great, mighty and awesome', had Moshe our teacher not said them in the Torah and had the members of the Great Assembly not come and incorporated them into the Amidah prayer, we would not be permitted to recite them. And you went on and recited all of these. It is comparable to a king who possessed many thousands of golden dinars, yet they were praising him for silver ones. Isn't that deprecatory?" (Berachot 33b)

It is clear from this Gemara that to praise Hashem more so than what was established in Tefillah is considered to be "*kol hamosif gorea*" - in other words adding detracts since we are in reality limiting G-d's greatness by containing him to the finite praises we are able to articulate. This idea is expressed even more definitively in the Yerushalmi:

"Rabbi Yochanan and Rabbi Yonatan went to make peace in the Southern settlements. They came to a place where they found the reader saying: "The great God, the strong and awe-inspiring, the noble and overpowering;" they stopped him and told him: you are not permitted to add to the formula the Sages coined for benedictions." (Berachot Yerushalmi 9:1)

The Rambam codifies this as well, stating:

"It is also forbidden to multiply epithets and say: "O God, Great, Mighty, Awe-inspiring, Powerful, Puissant", since it is beyond human power to exhaust the praises of God. One should therefore

limit himself to the attributes used by Moshe, our teacher, peace be upon him.” (Mishneh Torah Hilchot Tefillah 9:7)

While one could theoretically argue that this is only true in Tefillah itself, the Rambam deals very sharply with those who compose songs in the “greatness of G-d” in his Moreh Nevuchim:

*“The idea is best expressed in the book of Psalms, “Silence is praise to Thee” (lxxv. 2). It is a very expressive remark on this subject; for whatever we utter with the intention of extolling and of praising Him, contains something that cannot be applied to God, and includes derogatory expressions; it is therefore more becoming to be silent, and to be content with intellectual reflection.. We cannot approve of what those foolish persons do who are extravagant in praise, fluent and prolix in the prayers they compose, **and in the hymns they make** in the desire to approach the Creator. They describe God in attributes which would be an offense... Treating the Creator as a familiar object, they describe Him and speak of Him in any expressions they think proper; they eloquently continue to praise Him in that manner, and believe that they can thereby influence Him and produce an effect on Him. If they find some phrase suited to their object in the words of the Prophets they are still more inclined to consider that they are free to make use of such texts--which should at least be explained--to employ them in their literal sense, to derive new expressions from them, to form from them numerous variations, and to found whole compositions on them. This license is frequently met with in the compositions of the singers, preachers, and **others who imagine themselves to be able to compose a poem**. Such authors write things which **partly are real heresy, partly contain such folly and absurdity that they naturally cause those who hear them to laugh**, but also to feel grieved at the thought that such things can be uttered in reference to God. Were it not that I pitied the authors for their defects and did not wish to injure them, I should have cited some passages to show you their mistakes; besides, the fault of their compositions is obvious to all intelligent persons. You must consider it, and think thus: If slander and libel is a great sin, how much greater is the sin of those who speak with looseness of tongue in reference to God, and describe Him by attributes which are far below Him; and I declare that they not only commit an ordinary sin, but unconsciously at least incur the guilt of profanity and blasphemy.” (Moreh Nevuchim 1:49)*

One would not be surprised that the Rambam does not include this in his text of the Haggadah at the end of Hilchot Pesach. In other words, the Rambam was most likely not singing this tune.

Another concept expressed is the notion that Hashem should build the third Beit Hamikdash. The song’s *pizmon* states clearly, **“God, build your house quickly!”** This idea can be traced to an assumption made in Masechet Sukkah. There we find a discussion regarding Rabbi Yochanan’s institution to not eat *chadash* for the entirety of the “*Yom haNef*” post *churban HaBayit*, the second day of Pesach, upon which we wave the Omer sacrifice signaling permission to eat the new crop . The Gemara states:

“The Gemara asks: When is it that the Temple will be rebuilt in this scenario? If we say that it will be rebuilt on the sixteenth of Nisan, since in the morning the Temple was not yet built, the illuminating of the eastern sky permitted one to eat the new grain, as the omer offering could not

*yet be brought. Rather, say that it will be rebuilt on the fifteenth of Nisan or on some earlier date, in which case the new grain would not become permitted by the illuminating of the eastern sky. In that case, from midday and onward let it be permitted to eat the new grain, as we learned in a mishna in tractate Menahot: The people distant from Jerusalem, who are unaware of the precise time when the omer was brought, are permitted to eat the new grain from midday and onward because the members of the court are not indolent with regard to the omer and would not postpone bringing the offering after midday. **The Gemara answers: No, it is necessary to institute the ordinance only in the case where the Temple will be rebuilt at night, on the evening of the sixteenth, and there was no opportunity to cut the omer that night.** Alternatively, it was necessary to institute the ordinance in the case where the Temple was built **adjacent to sunset on the fifteenth** because there would not be sufficient time to complete all the preparations and sacrifice the offering by noon the next day.” (Masechet Sukkah 41A)*

This Gemara concludes with the unquestioned assumption that there is indeed a possibility that the Beit Hamikdash could either be built at night or that it could be built on Yom Tov. However this is in clear contradiction to Masechet Shavuot 15B which rules explicitly that, “the Beit Hamikdash can not be built at night nor on Yom Tov!”

Rashi (ibid) among others solve this problem with the claim that the gemara in Shavuot is discussing a Mikdash built by men, while the gemara here in Sukka is discussing the third Beit HaMikdash which will be built by Hashem himself, descending prefabbed from the heavens citing the verse, “*the sanctuary of Hashem, You shall form with Your hands,*” (Shemot 15:17) There are indeed aggadic sources in Chaz”al that support such a claim, (see Bava Kama 60B for example) and this would fit nicely with our song’s pizmon which is a plea for Hashem himself to build His house.

As you would expect the Rambam clearly disagrees. The Rambam describes the Mashich Ben David as follows:

*”The King Mashiach will arise and re-establish the monarchy of David as it was in former times. **He will build the Mikdash** and gather in the dispersed of Israel.” (Mishneh Torah Hilchot Melachim 11:1)*

Similarly in Hilchot Beit HaBechirah the Rambam writes in describing the mitzvah aseh to build the Mikdash:

*“The building which Shlomo built has already been described in Sefer Melachim. Similarly, the **Mikdash which will be built in the future** which is mentioned in Yechezkel, is not described clearly or completely. The people of the Second Commonwealth built their Temple like Shlomo’s with some of the features described explicitly in Yechezkel,” (Mishneh Torah Hilchot Beit HaBechirah, 1:4).*

The Rambam also counts this as a mitzvah leedorot in the Sefer HaMitzvot adding,

“And the specifics of this mitzvah have already been explained, in other words, the building of the Beit Hamikdash and it’s description, and the construction of the Mizbeach, and this is a Masechet which is connected to this idea, and this is Masechet Tamid.” (Sefer HaMitzvot 20)

In other words, the Rambam claims that the whole purpose of Masechet Tamid, which lists the measurements of the Temple, is in order for us to be able to fulfill this Mitzvah in the future.

There was a Haggadah printed in 1935, which was based on the Rambam’s nusach of the Haggadah as found at the end of his Hilchot Pesach in the Mishneh Torah, and includes various minhagim of the Gr”a. The Haggadah was printed in commemoration of 800 years since the life of the Rambam, and printed in honor of 215 years since the birth of the Gr”a, born on the first of day of Pesach, the 15th of Nissan in the year 5480, (or April 23, 1720). On the title page, the author (a grandson of the Gr”a) explains the significance of this date as being *“למלאות טו”ר שנה להולדו”* - the word *טור* is both the numerical number of 215, and also symbolically hinting to his birth date on the *טו ניסן*. Additionally, I imagine the idea behind *טור* was to express the notion of the halachic soundness of this new Haggadah (the *טור* being the forerunner to the Shulchan Aruch, the final codification of Halacha); relying on a validated text for the Maggid such as the Rambam’s, and minhagim with proper basis such as those rooted to the Vilna Gaon. In this Haggadah it does include the Nirtzah section, including our song *Adir Hu*, with a note that the entire section was included from the *Sefer Mateh Moshe*, one of the students of the Maharsha”¹ (1500’s). With all due respect to the Vilna Gaon’s grandson, I can only imagine how the Rambam was rolling in his grave when this Hagaddah was printed in his memory - inclusive of songs which he referred to as, *“real heresy”* and *“such folly and absurdity that they naturally cause those who hear them to laugh!”*

As you conclude the Seder, whether you choose to sing this particular song or not, remember to prioritize the true essence of the night, the children, and ensure to engage them in both discussion and in song.

Chad Gadya: Destined for Destruction

Yotam Berendt ~ *Migdal 5781; Charlotte, NC*

In the closing lines of *Nirtzah*, families across the world end their *Pesach Sedarim* with the upbeat tale of one unfortunate baby goat and its purchase by a father for two *zuz*. The ill-fated goat is devoured by a cat, which is killed by a dog, which is beaten by a stick, etc. Beyond a catchy tune, what lessons can we take from this iconic slaughterhouse sing-along?

There have been many attempts through the ages to explain this gory 16th century ditty, attempts that range from dizzyingly convoluted and cosmic, to poignantly simple and shallow. One explanation posits that the song represents the process of *Korban Pesach*. Another asserts that each character represents our past oppressors and their clashes. The *Gra* explains the various entities as representing everything from lofty emotional concepts all the way down to the lentils that Yakov sold to Eisav.

The most common lesson among the myriad explanations for *Chad Gadya*, one that can be found in most *Haggadot*, goes something like this: despite all the trials and tribulations we face, God is our ultimate savior, the arbiter of our retribution, and the merciless destroyer of our enemies. This is all well and good, and fits in perfectly with most conventional understandings of the general themes of *Pesach*, but its placement at the end of the *Haggadah* seems redundant. Haven't we just spent the entire night emphasizing how we've been wronged and how God saved us? What does *Chad Gadya* have to offer us that's actually unique?

Perhaps *Chad Gadya* is not unique in its theme, but rather in the way in which it frames it. When we examine the story of our liberation from the Egyptians, we watch the process of revenge, restitution and redemption take place; *Bnei Yisrael* not only sees justice carried out upon their masters, they also leave Egypt in an elevated state on the path to serving God in their own land.

Chad Gadya embodies the destructive aspect of vengeance perfectly, but it lacks any semblance of the positive, of the constructive, of redemption. It represents termination of life, leaving God as the "last one standing" after a considerable bloodbath. In that vein, it is not a triumphant song about being saved by God, nor is it Ecclesiastic wailing about the vanity of life; rather, it is a reminder that violence for its own sake is a pointless, self-perpetuating endeavor, a last resort to be avoided and despised.

As we celebrate this *Pesach*, may we all merit to work towards a more peaceful world and more peaceful selves, one which focuses on positive redemption rather than destructive vengeance. Through enough determination, we can all live to see a world in which goats, cats, dogs, sticks, fire, water, oxen and butchers and angels of death all get along.

לשנה הבאה במגדל!
חג שמח