

PESACH TO GO 5766

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The Nine Aspects Of The Haggada

HaRav Joseph B. Soloveitchik

The Haggada is based upon and revolves around the section in the Torah known as the "Arami Oved Avi" portion, which appears at the beginning of Sidrat Ki Tavo (Devarim 26). This is the passage that each Jew recited upon bringing the first fruits, the Bikkurim, to the Temple in Jerusalem. It is clear from the Talmud in Pesachim 116a, and the Rambam's codification in Hilkhos Hametz u'Matza 7:1, 7:4, that the recitation of this passage is essential to the fulfillment of the mitzva of Sippur Yetziat Mitzrayim. Why in fact do our sages choose this passage as the focal point of the Haggada?

We must conclude that each Jew, in addition to offering the first fruits, was commanded to fulfill the mitzva of Sippur Yetziat Mitzrayim. Thus there are two times during the year that the Jew must relate the Story of the Exodus from Egypt; at the Havaat Bikkurim and on the night of the Seder.

The Torah presented us with the text for the Havaat Bikkurim. However, with regards to the Seder night all that we find in the Torah is the general commandment: "You shall tell your son on that day, saying, this is done (the Pesach observance) because of what the Eternal did for me when I came out of Egypt" (Shemot 13:8). A specific text is not mandated. ChaZa"L, however, concluded that the "Arami Oved Avi" text which fulfilled the requirement of Sippur at the bringing of the Bikkurim, would also be appropriate at the Seder.

The use of a common text indicates that the seemingly distinct rituals, in fact, have a common theme or purpose. That purpose is to give thanks and express gratitude to the Almighty. Both recitations are acts of Hakkarat haTov to the Eternal.

The essence of the Seder, and hence that of Sippur Yetziat Mitzrayim, is the expression of gratitude to the Almighty on the great liberation and miracles that he wrought for us in Egypt. As the Rambam states in Sefer haMitzvot: "We are commanded to tell the story at the beginning of the fifteenth of Nissan... and we are to thank Him for all the goodness He has bestowed upon us" (Mitzva 157). On the Seder night at the climax of Maggid we say: "Therefore we are obligated to thank and praise... exalt and revere Him who performed all those miracles and for us."

Similarly, the act of Havaat Bikkurim is an expression of thanksgiving and gratitude to the Almighty for granting the farmer and the people this holy land and its abundance after a history of wandering and suffering. The Jew recognizes that this land has come to him and his nation through a chain of miraculous and divinely ordained episodes throughout history. Therefore, the Arami Oved Avi passage contains a short synopsis of early history, with an emphasis on the enslavement in Egypt, the Exodus and the entry into the Land of Israel. The Jew, when bringing the Bikkurim states (Devarim 26:3): "I say today before the Lord, your God...". However, the Targum of Yonatan Ben Uziel translates: "I will give gratitude and praise this day to the Lord...". The passage was understood by ChaZa"L as a statement of thanksgiving and gratitude to the Almighty. (In fact, from this comment of the Targum it is possible to suggest that the word Haggada does not only imply the idea of "telling," but also the notion of thanksgiving and gratitude.)

1) Let us now analyze some of the various aspects of the Haggada. It will help us to begin with a comparison of the Sippur Yetziat Mitzrayim that the Jew engages in at the Havaat haBikkurim and that of the Seder night. The common feature and first aspect of Sippur Yetziat Mitzrayim on both these occasions is the Sippur. We read and tell a story. This recitation must consist of the

biblical text of the Arami Oved Avi passage. In a word, we engage in Mikra. In this respect the Havaat Bikkurim and the Seder night are identical.

2) At this stage, however, the two rituals part company. In the act of Havaat Bikkurim, the Torah only required that a text be recited. There is no requirement that it be translated or elaborated upon. In contrast, on the Seder night there are additional demands. The Mitzva of Sippur Yetziat Mitzrayim at the Seder is basically an act of Talmud Torah. Talmud Torah involves within it elaboration and exegesis. The Mishna in Pesachim (10:4) mandates: "And he explains and elaborates from Arami Oved Avi until he concludes the whole portion." The Mishna speaks of "Limud," which involves translation, asking of questions and conceptualization. In fact, the core of Maggid is a systematic exegesis and discussion of every word of the Arami Oved Avi passage. We engage in a Torah sheBaal Peh analysis, of a Torah sheBikhtav text.

This analysis utilizes all the elements that comprise Torah sheBaal Peh. For our purposes these elements may be subdivided into three different areas. The first is Midrash. This refers to the exegesis of biblical verses in accordance with the hermeneutical rules set down by our sages (e.g. the Thirteen Middot of Rabbi Yishmael, the Thirty-two Middot of Rabbi Eliezer).

The second category is Mishna. This refers to the set laws and statements cited in the Mishnayot and Memrot.

Finally, we have Gemara, which refers to halakhic analysis and conceptualization. Rashi in various places in the Talmud translates Gemara as – the Sevarot – the logical basis for the laws of the Mishna. However, the most full and eloquent definition is given by Rambam in Hilkhos Talmud Torah (1:11): "And one is obligated to apportion his time of study, so that he spends one third of his time studying Torah sheBikhtav, another third, Torah sheBaal Peh, and one third in understanding and trying to see the development from one step to another from beginning to end, and he should compare cases and derive one idea from another; these elements are called Gemara."

In the Haggada we find that all three areas of the oral law are used and applied. Firstly, we have

Midrash. As was quoted above, the Arami Oved Avi passage is interpreted and explained through the different devices of Midrash. Secondly, the Haggada includes a number of passages of Mishna, of set halakhot and statements. Examples include the passage taken from the Mishna in Pesachim (10:5) "Rabban Gamliel used to say, anyone who has not said these three things at Passover has not fulfilled his obligation, etc.," and the response to the wise son "And you shall even tell him, (all the halakhot including) "We do not eat any food after the eating of the Afikoman," which is a law found in the Mishna in Pesachim (10:8). Finally, the Haggada contains elements of "Gemara," of logical deductions and inferences. An example of this is the passage "Therefore, it is our duty to thank, praise..." which is a logical conclusion based upon the reading of the immediately preceding Halakhot (i.e. Pesach, Matza and Marror). Thus the Haggada not only involves Mikra, but also Limud. In fact the word Haggada and its root "Haged" imply not only telling, but also an act of study and Talmud Torah, as we find prior to Matan Torah when the Almighty commands Moshe, "Thus shall you say to the House of Yaakov and tell (vetaggid) to the Children of Israel" (Shemot 19:3).

3) It is not enough, however, for the Jew to be a student the night of the Seder; he must also become a teacher. This reflects the third aspect of the Haggada–Masora. The Jew must teach his children and others about the glorious event that occurred in Egypt long ago. The Haggada, before the passage about the four sons, included the portion "Blessed be the Omnipotent. Blessed be He who hath given the Torah to his people Israel. Blessed be He, etc." What, in fact, is this passage? In a word, it is a short version of Birkat haTorah –the blessing made on the Torah. If we carefully examine the Torah blessings, in general, we see that they, too, stress the aspect of Masora, the passing on of tradition. We state "And the house of Israel. And we and our children and our children's children should all be privileged to know your name, and be students of your Torah for its own sake." Moreover, at the close of the blessing we say, "Blessed by the Lord, who teaches Torah to His people, Israel." It is as if the Almighty himself becomes part of that Masora community. After this blessing, appears the passage about the four sons, which concretizes the notion of teach-

ing and passing on the Story of the Exodus to one's children each at his respective level.

4) The fourth aspect is the "question and answer" style dialogue that is found in parts of the Haggada. Why is it so crucial that the child ask questions; why do we prompt him? Simply put, Judaism insists that God reveals himself to the man who seeks after and thirsts for God. The verse in Devarim (4:29) reads: "But if you search there for the Lord your God, you will find him if only you will seek him with all your heart and soul." We want to initiate the child into the Masora community that seeks out the Almighty and yearns for his presence and illumination. We want the child to become a "Mevakesh Hashem"—"a seeker of God."

5) The fifth aspect of Sippur Yetziat Mitzrayim is the central role that the meal and food play at the Seder. The drama of Sippur Yetziat Mitzrayim begins with Kiddush and closes with Nishmat and Yishtabach after the meal. In fact, this is the reason that the Shulkhan Arukh, O.C. 472:1, is so careful in specifying that the Kiddush on the night of the fifteenth of Nissan should be recited after astronomical nightfall. (On other festivals, one may usher in the festival and recite Kiddush earlier when it is still daytime.) Kiddush is part of Sippur Yetziat Mitzrayim, and therefore, must take place on the night of the fifteenth proper. Kiddush the night of Pesach plays two roles. One is the normal role of Kiddush as the introduction of the festive meal as on every festival. Secondly, it is part of Sippur Yetziat Mitzrayim. Kiddush contains within it the statement "who has chosen us from all nations," which is identical to the third language of Geulat Mitzrayim found in Sidrat Va'era (6:7) "Velakachti": – "and shall take you unto me for a nation."

Moreover, there is another more basic reason for Kiddush playing a role in Sippur Yetziat Mitzrayim. Sippur Yetziat Mitzrayim contains within it two elements. One is the recitation of certain passages. Second, is the element of performing certain actions, eating of certain foods, etc. When one eats Matza, Marror, and Korban Pesach on the Seder night one fulfills these specific mitzvot. However, in addition, through the eating of these foods one is able to teach and convey the messages of Geulat Mitzrayim. They function as audio-visual aids in our educational

scheme, namely, the Seder. This is what Rabban Gamliel was trying to convey. (in the Mishna "Whoever has not said these three things has not fulfilled his obligation" 10:5, etc.) He wanted the Jew, before he partakes of the foods, to explain their significance and message, to all who are at this table. Sippur Yetziat Mitzrayim is a careful blend, then, of narrative, teaching and actions to get across a unified message.

Kiddush also opens the Seuda every Shabbat and festival. Kiddush puts the meal in a context of holiness, uplifting it from a mundane effort to satisfy biological needs to the realm of the sacred. The idea of "a meal before God" is a fundamental one in Judaism.

It is along these lines that our sages (Berakhot 55a) spoke of "an individual's table is an atonement for his sins" and "a dining table is similar to an altar."

6) As was previously stated, the Mikra Bikkurim involves praise and thanksgiving to the Almighty. However, this is an awareness that comes about indirectly. The farmer recites the Arami Oved Avi passage which in itself, when understood, expresses gratitude. It is almost a notion of "Kriyata zu Hilula (Megillah 14a)." The praise is implicit in the narration.

In contrast, on the night of the Seder we are enjoined not only to praise and give gratitude, but rather to break forth into spontaneous song – "Let us, therefore, sing a new song in his presence, Halleluya." The Jew's heart is overflowing with feelings of joy and thanksgiving. It is the night of the great romance between the Almighty and Knesset Yisrael—"I am to my beloved and my beloved is to me." It is these feelings that are expressed in the custom of reading the book of Shir haShirim the night of the Seder.

Philosophically, one can ask, who is lowly man that he should have the audacity to praise God? Is not man "dust and ashes"? How then does he have the right to praise the infinite being, the Almighty? The Halakha responds true, philosophically, there may be problems, however the Jew cannot contain himself. The Jew, on the night of the Seder, is overflowing with thanksgiving and song to God, and he cannot repress this authentic

need to express his gratitude to the Holy one, Blessed be He.

7) As the Jew approaches the Story of the Exodus, there may be a tendency to look at the event as remote and distant from the here and now. Therefore, the Haggada contains within it three passages that help us deal with this problem. First of all, before the recitation of the Arami Oved Avi passage, we say: "And if God had not taken our ancestors out of Egypt, we and our children and our children's children would still be enslaved in Egypt." We make a declaration of relevance. Why, in fact, are we discussing these events of history; what is their relevance to our present situation? And to this we respond that were it not for the redemption in Egypt, there would be no Jewish People today.

Secondly, before Hallel we recite that "in every generation a person should look upon himself as if he personally had come out of Egypt. Not our ancestors alone did the Holy One, blessed be He, redeem, but us also He redeemed with them." The events of Yetziat Mitzrayim are not only relevant to us, rather, we are actually re-experiencing history on the night of the Seder. It is a current as well as a historical event. This recognition enables us to recite Hallel and break forth into spontaneous song, because it is we who left Egypt as well.

Finally, we recite the "Vehi sheAmda" passage: "For not only one tyrant has risen up against us to destroy us, but in every generation tyrants have sought to destroy us and the Holy One, Blessed be He, delivered us from their hands." Not only do we relive the experience of Egypt, but also we realize that danger and annihilation threaten the Jewish people in every generation and locale. We move from the historical events to a better understanding of our current situation. The custom is that at this point in the Seder, one lifts up his cup of wine. Why is this done? The cup is the symbol of Jewish destiny and eternity - Netzach Yisrael, as the verse (Tehillim 116:13) "A cup of salvation I shall uplift, and call on the Almighty's name" indicates. At the Seder we speak of the relevance of historical events, the reliving of those events and the cycle of danger and redemption that is characteristic of Jewish history.

8) The Mishna in Pesachim (10:5) dictates "and he explains the Arami Oved Avi passage until he

completes it." However, in our Haggada we do not complete the passage in its totality. We do not recite and discuss the last verse and a half, which read: "He hath brought us into this place, and hath given us this land, a land flowing (with) milk and honey. And now, behold, I have brought the first of the fruits of the land which Thou hast given to me, O Lord..." (Devarim 26:9-10). The farmer bringing the Bikkurim would include these verses and then set down the fruits "before the Lord your God." It is understandable why the Haggada did not include the last verse that discusses the actual bringing of fruits, as that is out of place on the Seder night. However, why was the verse discussing the entry into the Land of Israel not included in our version of Haggada? A number of approaches exist to resolve this problem. First of all, if we included this reference to the Land of Israel, we would convey the impression that there are five languages or references of Geula and not four (as we maintain). We would include "veheveti" as one of the references of Geula, and ChaZa"L felt that this would not be appropriate on the Seder night. Why is this the case? Firstly, the four references of Geula that were stated by the Almighty to Moshe in Sidrat Vaera, were new ideas that had not been expressed to the Patriarchs. However, "veheveti", "and I shall bring you into the land..." was already promised to Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov in their respective Brit Avot. They were already promised that their descendants would inherit the Land of Israel. Secondly, although the Jewish people did enter into the Land of Israel subsequent to the Exodus from Egypt this was not the primary goal of Yetziat Mitzrayim. It was their destination but not their destiny. The direct goal of Yetziat Mitzrayim was the revelation at Sinai. The goal was the transformation of a subjugated people into "a nation of priests and a holy nation." It was not just to grant them political and economic freedom, but also to create a sacred people. Moshe, at the episode of the burning bush, asked the Almighty: "Who (am) I that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the Children of Israel out of Egypt?" (Shemot 3:11). And the Almighty gives an answer that seems at first to be a bit difficult: "Certainly I will be with you and this shall be unto you the sign that I have sent you: When thou has brought forth the people out of Egypt they shall serve God upon this mountain." What was the Almighty saying to Moshe; how did this answer his query? The Almighty was

stating,— know, Moshe, that the purpose of Geulat Mitzrayim is not political and social freedom. For that task, I would not have picked you. I did not pick you to be a diplomat or a king or political leader. Rather, the purpose of the Exodus is to create a holy nation, to make them a Torah nation. For this purpose, God says, I need a Rebbe, a teacher and mentor who will lead and guide this people. And for this role, you are the best candidate. Pesach is the holiday of Yetziat Mitzrayim and leads into Shavuot and Matan Torah. These two festivals do not focus on the Land of Israel as a central theme. According to Rambam in Moreh Nevukhim (3:43), it is Succot, rather, that is the holiday which celebrates the Land of Israel.

Thirdly, it is possible to suggest that during the time the Temple still stood, the text of the Haggada did include the last verses relating to the entry into the Land of Israel. Upon the destruction of the Temple and the subsequent exile, ChaZa"L amended the text in order to conform

to the new reality in which Am Yisrael found itself.

9) Finally, on the night of the Seder, the Jew mentions all the wonderful things that the Almighty has done and is doing for him and his people. This, in fact, is the thrust of Birkat haMazon and, therefore, it also functions as part of Sippur Yetziat Mitzrayim (in addition to its role as Grace after the meal.) After discussing God's special relationship with the Jewish People we move to the Hallel haGadol, which contains a recognition of God's benevolence to the whole world. We recognize and express gratitude for this, as we state, "Who giveth food unto all flesh, for His kindness endures forever." This leads us to the climax of the Seder, "Nishmat", when we speak of the future, the Acharit haYamim, when all living beings shall give praise to the Almighty—Nishmat kol chai tevarekh..." These portions add a glorious eschatological dimension to the Shevach and Hoda' a sections that are so essential to the Haggada.

Passover And Human Diversity

Rabbi Dr. Norman Lamm

One of the most popular passages of the Haggadah is that of "The Four Sons." I have often wondered why I never met any of these four "in the flesh," as it were. Is there anyone so "wicked," so evil, that he has no redeeming feature whatsoever - even that of making the trains come on time? Is there a Wise Son who never committed a faux pas; who never uttered a foolish statement? Have we ever met a Pious Son who never sinned - in defiance of the verse in Kohelet (7:20) that "there is no man upon earth who [always] does good and never sins"? And the Son who does not know enough to ask - has he no modicum of intelligence at all?

After a few youthful years of having my curiosity seasonally piqued by this question, it occurred to me that these are archetypes, not four real, living, distinct individuals; indeed, it is extremely rare, indeed impossible, to find pure examples of these types in real life. Almost all people are composites of two or three or four - in fact, hundreds - of types of "sons," and in different proportions. Were they meant to represent real people, the Tradition would most likely have identified a representation for each of the Four Sons. Yet this is not the case, except for Haggadah artists throughout the ages whose fertile imaginations led them to identify and illuminate individual "real" people, as Wise or Wicked, Simple or Who does not know enough to ask, in their illustrations for the Haggadah.

In that case, the passage on The Four Sons reflects Judaism's acceptance of the human propensity for internal contradictions, inconsistency, ambivalence and paradox. This acknowledgment is more than a reluctant reconciliation with painful fact; it is, as well, a desideratum, a welcome aspect of human character. Furthermore, the selection of the Four Sons is not the only part of the Seder that reveals an understanding of ambivalence and paradox; another significant exam-

ple is the prevalence of the matzah, which is considered both a sign of freedom and a sign of servitude.

The complexity of human personality was clearly recognized by the Torah and the Sages throughout history. Thus, according to the Avot de-Rebbe Natan (I, chap. 37), man is like the beasts in three ways and like the angels in three other ways. He is partly an animal and partly a Divine Image. The moral drama of life is usually driven by the endless battle between a man's sense of righteousness and his concupiscence - his yetzer ha-tov and his yetzer ha-ra.

The Jerusalem Talmud records the law, which we follow to this day, that whoever sees large numbers of people massed together should recite the blessing, "Blessed be the One who is Wise over all secrets," for just as people's faces differ one from the other, so do their characters and opinions differ one from the other (J.T. Berachot 9:1, p. 13c). The "secret" is how people of such diverse qualities and outlooks can yet coexist as part of the same multitude.

In a sense, this individual differentness is surprising, given the doctrine of the creation of man in the Image of God. If we are all created in the Divine Image, should we not all be the same? The answer is that the unity of God is not merely a matter of number but also of utter uniqueness, and it is this quality that constitutes the essence of the Divine Image that we are bidden to reflect. Hence, we are each unique despite, or perhaps because, we are created in His Image. The Talmud explains (Sanhedrin 38a) that the variance of mankind is a manifestation of God's glory through His ability to create many varied images from one mold. Our differentness, then, is our glory, for it is the reflection of our creation in the Divine Image that is the source of the sacredness of our individuality.

Man's rich complexity, a composite that accounts for each human as distinct and different from every other human being, thus has the potential for his noblest achievements - as well as his most disgraceful failures.

Indeed, there are times that this inconsistency is startling in the boldness of its internal clash, and the psychological and spiritual consequences of such contradictions do not warrant any benevolent interpretation or apology. As the Rabbis taught, a sin "extinguishes" a Mitzvah, (Sotah 21a). Despicable conduct is not excusable by occasional or even frequent acts of goodness.

A dramatic example of the dangers of such inner dissonance is that of King Solomon. The Biblical Song of Songs, or Shir ha-Shirim, contains one verse (3:11) that disturbed the Rabbis. The verse reads: "Go forth, O daughters of Zion, and gaze upon King Solomon, even upon the crown with which his mother has crowned him on the day of his wedding and the gladness of his heart."

What is it that so intrigued the Sages? "We reviewed all of Scripture and could find no reference to a crown that Bat-Sheva made for Solomon," declares Rav Chanina bar Yitzchak in Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah 3. But if Scripture provides no details, the eminent commentator Rabbi Moshe Alshech points to the Oral Law, both Talmud (Sanhedrin 70b) and Midrash (Bamidbar Rabbah, 10), which offer them in abundance. According to these sources, "the day of his marriage" refers to the day King Solomon married the pagan daughter of the Egyptian Pharaoh. "The day of the happiness of his heart" refers to the day he dedicated the Holy Temple in Jerusalem.

What a remarkable - and disturbing - coincidence! The king violates the cardinal prohibition against intermarriage on the very same day that he presides over the culmination of the historic dedication of the Beit ha-Mikdash! To compound matters, the celebration of the wedding far exceeded that of the Temple's dedication, and Solomon overslept while all the people were awaiting him for the Temple service. His mother, upset by the sudden and uncharacteristic transgression by her royal son, punished him and bitterly reproached him with searing words of censure. Here Rabbi Alshech adds that this very

harsh rebuke was the "crown" she made for her son! "The day of painful and enforced awareness of his striking inconsistency was the gift his mother bestowed upon him.

While this account contains much aggadic hyperbole, the lesson is clear: If such glaring and calamitous disjunctiveness and inconstancy of character can afflict the Biblical personality hailed as the "wisest of all men" (see Kings 13:12), how much more so the rest of the human race!

The catastrophic inconsistency ascribed to King Solomon is shocking because of the dominating and charismatic personality of Solomon as depicted in the Tanach. The Talmud (Sukkah 52a) avers that the greater the man, the greater his yetzer ha-ra - his libidinous capacity and his powerful negative urges. Unfortunately, the type is all too common, a universal affliction, and is not at all restricted to eminences. Consider, for instance, the man who is generous, who helps and is courteous to friends, but is humiliating and abusive to his wife and children. Or the one who prays with great intensity, but has no compunctions about cheating from his employer or deceiving his customers. Or the person who eats kosher, but does not act, talk or sleep kosher. Regretfully, there is no dearth of illustrations of similar outrageous dissonance of character. In many such cases, the culprit possesses elements of each of the Four Sons, perhaps with the Rasha, or Wicked Son, predominating. We are all prone to inconsistency; it is universal and usually benevolent, but no one should quietly accept the kind of clash of attributes that bespeaks a horrendous violation of one's avowed principles. Magnanimity to the synagogue building fund does not excuse intermarriage, as Solomon's mother taught him. Each act stands on its own, and the owner of the fragmented character must wrestle with his spiritually split personality.

King Solomon wore many great crowns - those of royalty, wisdom, and power - but the most meaningful of all was the crown his mother gave him: her refusal to accept his weakness as incorrigible, his inconsistencies as unsolvable and his self-indulgences as excusable simply because he built the magnificent and Holy Temple in Jerusalem. It was the crown of rebuke by a wise mother to a beloved child whose superior wisdom failed him at the most critical time of his life. Bat-Sheva

taught us all that in raising children - even adult children! - we must be honest and unsparing in our criticism. Such reproach is what parents owe their children - provided, of course, that while we are angry we must not be hostile/harsh but not mean, hurting but not hating.

Equally if not more important is the mirror that she urges us to hold up before our own eyes so that we might learn for ourselves when inconstancy, although ubiquitous, is intolerable. Or, as the author of the Haggadah implies, each of us has a bit of the Rasha within himself or herself, but we must never let our own rish'ut get the best of us.

An Analysis Of Had Gadya

by Rabbi Kenneth Brander

One of the most dynamic experiences in the Jewish calendar is the Pesah Seder. It is multi-faceted and quite often intergenerational. Young children come to the Seder table equipped with curiosity, with Divrei Torah and prepared to sing, some for the first time, the Mah Nishtanah. Children learn from the wisdom of their parents and grandparents, and adults share with each other various insights concerning the Haggadah and the Egyptian experience. The Seder's verbal dialogue, is fostered by experiential elements integrated into the Haggadah script. The Seder is an experience which galvanizes our senses, causing us to reflect upon the pains of our servitude and the challenges of redemption.

The Seder is divided into fourteen sections. The final section is known as Nirtzah, which contains various songs and poems. Some focus on the miracles of redemption that have permeated Jewish history, others on the belief system basic to the Jewish people. One such poem has been the enigmatic poem of Had Gadya. It recounts the purchase of a lamb who is being pursued by various animals and forces of nature.

There are those who suggest that Had Gadya is inserted into the Seder experience in order to create excitement and keep the children awake and entertained.' This seems to suggest that Had Gadya is a meaningless poem whose purpose is to be a vehicle of amusement. Can such a perspective be substantiated? Would the authors/editors of the Haggadah, insert a "nursery rhyme" for sheer amusement purposes? Furthermore, if Had Gadya is merely an "attention grabber" for the children, it would have been more productive to insert it somewhere in the middle of Haggadah as it would re-energize them, encouraging the children to continue participating in the Haggadah experience. Additionally, in the responsa of R. Hayyim Yosef David Azulai² we are told that someone was mocking the Had Gadya poem and

was excommunicated. Rabbi Azulai defends the excommunication and considers it deserved:

This individual (who mocked Had Gadya) has ridiculed what has been the custom of tens of thousands of Jews in cities and suburbs of Poland and Germany. Included in these thousands of Jews (who recite the Had Gadya poem) are world Torah luminaries, of the highest level of holiness, as well as the scholars of every generation. Even today the Jewish people have not been orphaned and there are many Roshei Yeshiva and great scholars, may God continue to sustain them, who all recite the piyyut of Had Gadya. This person who ridiculed Had Gadya is a rasha for he mocks a myriad of Jews.

In this responsum Rabbi Azulai includes a discussion on the possible meaning behind Had Gadya.

There is no doubt that Had Gadya is not a meaningless poem. We have already been informed that the secrets behind many of these poems/prayers have been passed on (from one generation to another) and from one rabbi to another.

Indeed Maimonides³ indicates that while Rabbinic texts are not to be taken at face value, rather in fact they contain a deeper meaning.

The third category comprises... so very few that it is almost incorrect to call it a category at all.... It consists of those men that have a clear conception of the greatness of the sages and of their surpassing intelligence, so that we find passages among their sayings that penetrate to the most profound truth. Although these men are but few and far between, their writings bear witness to their perfection, and to the fact that they have grasped the truth .. They also know that the sages were not making jokes. Thus it

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becomes obvious truth to them that in their sayings we have to distinguish open and hidden meanings. Any statement or passage of theirs (of the Rabbis) that contains an apparent impossibility can therefore only be an allusion and allegory. This is the practice of great scholars.

It is the purpose of this article to explore and clarify the role of Had Gadya within the Seder experience. In keeping with the tradition of the Seder we will pose four questions about the Had Gadya⁴ poem. When answered, our understanding of Had Gadya will hopefully, be substantially increased.

Question 1: What symbolic meanings can be inferred from the Had Gadya poem?

Question 2: The Talmud frowns upon Aramaic as a language of prayer:

One should never petition his/her needs in Aramaic and R. Yochanan said: When one petitions for his needs in Aramaic the ministering angels do not heed him, for they do not understand Aramaic⁵.

This idea is codified in the Shulhan Arukh:

When one prays as an individual (without a Minyan,) personal petitions may be requested in any language except Aramaic⁶.

Why is it that Had Gadya is the only complete passage in the Haggadah to be written and relegated to Aramaic? Does this carry any specific meaning?

Question 3: What is the theme of the final sections of the Haggadah - Hallel and Nirtzah?

Question 4: What function does Had Gadya play in developing those themes?

Let us explore these issues:

A. SYMBOLISM

At least a dozen commentators struggle to clarify and explain the symbolism behind Had Gadya.⁷ We will attempt to develop the approaches of

three of those commentators. While each approach is unique, they share one common denominator, focusing on the idea of redemption. This common thread is reflected in the large majority of approaches presented by the commentators.

For some the Had Gadya's symbolism elaborates the Jewish people's historical interaction with the world community and our ultimate redemption. Others view the symbolism of Had Gadya as stressing that communal redemption must be predicated upon personal salvation. For others Had Gadya is a review of the Passover Temple experience. Its utterance at the Seder then forces us in our diaspora existence to recommit ourselves towards a future lifestyle which is Jewishly whole; a lifestyle that will enable us to participate in the Temple service and the paschal sacrifice.

Approach 1 – Rav Yaakov Emden⁸ - "A Personal Odyssey of Self Development"

One Little Goat, One Little Goat That My Father Bought... The soul is compared to a small goat⁹. The soul is the dimension of the body that our father (God) in heaven has given us.

...For Two Zuzim...For R. Emden the word Zuzim is not a denomination of money, rather a plural form of Zuz, to move. According to Kabbalah the soul migrates twice before it reaches our body. Once from the heavenly world to the world of galgalim and then to our world and body.

Then came a CAT and ate the goat... The cat is an animal which will eat anything, whether it is good for it or not. Similarly in our infancy, we are undisciplined, we can become involved in habits, accustomed to desires which are damaging to our soul. "Tragic is a soul that is trapped in our undisciplined body". d'Za-bin Abba - which our father (God) entrusted to us.

One might think that being undisciplined as a child is acceptable for the child will soon grow up and the inappropriate behavior will give way to a more mature attitude.

Then came a DOG ...that ate the goat...If a child is not trained to embrace transcendental value it will grow up to be like a dog whose desires are never satiated. Our desires will continue

to run contrary to the ideals of the soul and will destroy the environment of our soul. "Woe is the soul which is housed in an unredeemed body". d'Za-bin Abba. - for our father (God) entrusted to us, with this precious commodity, the soul.

Perhaps as the child matures into an adult he will remember the covenant between God and the Jewish people causing a mending of the ways and a change in his gestalt.

Then came the STICK that beat the dog...that ate the goat ...If a child grows up with his desires unchallenged then these behaviors will become ingrained, "beaten in," to his psyche and his attitude will not change. These deviant behaviors will act like a weapon, a stick, beating and destroying the internal spirit of the soul. d'za-bin Abba - which our father (God) entrusted to us.

Then came a FIRE and burned the stick...that ate the goat...This behavior will continue and create "burning" passions and desires which will preclude any type of personal redemption. Fantasies and desires will burn a spiritual hole in the inner recesses of our self. Sinful desires will intensify until it will totally destroy the soul. d 'za-bin Abba - which our father (God) entrusted to us. Perhaps when we are senior in our years, our passions and behaviors which deviate from the norms/mores of Torah will automatically reform and allow our tormented soul to rise up from the shackles of impurity.

The WATER came and quenched the fire....that ate the goat...The soul will not automatically escape, for a person who has embraced a life style which is contrary to Torah values will have crushed and drowned the soul. dsza-bin Abba - which our father (God) entrusted to us.

Then came the OX which drank the water...that ate the goat...One must struggle to redeem oneself. One that does not and believes that it will happen on its own (automatically), is condemned to be considered a Shor Mu 'ad (an ox due to his consistently injurious behavior is considered a force of destruction and must be destroyed). An individual not willing to work on self-redemption will continue to "wallow" in behavior which will destroy the spirit of the soul. d 'Zabim Abba - which our father (God) entrusted to us.

Then came the SLAUGHTERER and slaughtered the ox...that ate the goat...Our Rabbis relate that with every sin a destructive force in the world is created.¹⁰ A lifestyle devoid of values, creates a slaughterer (destructive force) who will persecute and inflict punishment on those involved in sinful ways. These afflictions will torment the soul. d 'Za-bin Abba which our father (God) entrusted to us.

Then came The ANGEL OF DEATH and slew the slaughterer....that ate the goat... When the Angel of Death will remove the soul the deviant lifestyle will cause it to contain impurities "Woe is such a soul"! d'Za-bin Abba - which our father (God) entrusted to us.

Then came THE HOLY ONE, BLESSED BE HE, And Smote the Angel of Death...that ate the goat...When God examines "this soul" in heaven do not think that in God's presence the soul will automatically achieve purification.

For perfection of the soul and redemption of self can only be achieved in this world. It is in this world of experience that growth and self perfection may be achieved. Woe is the soul. that has not had the opportunity to struggle for greatness and to achieve perfection! d'Zabin Abba - Which our father (God) entrusted to us

Approach 2 - Rav Yonatan Eybeschuetz¹¹ - 'The Historical Saga of Jewish People'.

One Little Goat, One Little Goat That My Father Bought... The Jewish people are the lamb that God, our father, has bonded with.

...For Two Zuzim... Through two experiences Abraham's God has shown the eternal bond between Him and the Jewish people. They are: the Brit Ben ha'Betarim, the covenant of the pieces, which signifies that the destiny of the Jewish people is guided directly by God (1Malah Min ha Mazal); and the miraculous birth of Yitzhak to Abraham and Sarah highlighting the fact that the fate of the Jewish people will always defy nature and logic (1Malah Min ha 'Tevah).

Then came a CAT and ate the goat... This refers to the enslavement of the Jewish people by Pharaoh. The Talmud records that cats do not recognize their masters,¹² which typifies Pharaoh who

did not recognize God. As the verse states: "And Pharaoh said: 'Who is the Lord that I should obey his voice... I know not the Lord'"¹³

Then came a DOG...that ate the goat... This is Amalek. Like a dog who knows his owner,¹⁴ Amalek, through the miracles of Egypt, knew God. Nevertheless, Amalek rebelled against God by attacking the Jewish people. Their knowledge of God makes this rebellion worse than that of the Egyptian oppressors. Any nation bent on terrorizing/destroying the Jewish people is viewed as the physical/philosophical offspring of Amalek."¹⁵

Then came the STICK that beat the dog...that ate the goat ... This is the staff of Moshe. When lifted towards heaven (signifying the commitment to the bond between God and the Jewish people) the Amalakites, oppressors of the Jewish people, were defeated.

Then came a FIRE and burned the stick....that ate the goat... The commitment symbolized through the staff to God was further developed through Moshe by creating a structure for the Jew to bond with God, the mishkan. This ideal was fully developed after the Jewish people captured/settled the land of Israel by Shlomo building a permanent structure, the Beit ha 'Mikdash. However, all of this was destroyed with the fires of Nebuchadnezzar, who caused the Temple and Jerusalem to be razed and the Holy Ark and its contents to be buried.

The WATER came and quenched the fire....that ate the goat... Within Rabbinic literature water is symbolic of Torah.¹⁶ After the destruction of the first Temple, the charismatic leadership of Ezra created a new commitment to the values of Torah, its observance and study. Many important legislations were established by his court including: the mitzvah to study/read Torah regularly, formalized prayer, and the establishment of various laws to protect the sanctity of the Shabbat spirit¹⁷. The commitment of those who returned with Ezra to Israel to rebuild Israel and the Temple represents the water (commitment to Torah) which finally doused the fire of destruction which occurred seventy years earlier.

Then came the OX which drank the water....that ate the goat...Represents the Greek Hel-

lenists who, during the Second Temple period, forced the Jews to disavow any relationship with Jewish practice or God. They caused the fountains of Torah to dry up and insisted that Jews write on the horns of oxen that they are no longer committed to the God of Israel.¹⁸

Then came the SLAUGHTERER and slaughtered the ox....that ate the goat.. The Hasmonean family overthrew the Greek Hellenists and rededicated the Temple. The symbolism of a ritual slaughterer is used for it represents two components of the Hasmonean dynasty. First the courage of the Hasmoneans to defy the Greek Hellenists, overcoming religious tyranny. Second, the ritual task of a slaughterer may only be performed by a Jew.¹⁹ Born out of Hasmonean dynasty is Herod, a non Jewish servant of the family. Herod usurps the throne and in his disgust for Rabbinic leadership murders them all, except for Baba Ben Buta. The ritual slaughterer signifies that the Hasmonean dynasty did not include Herod's rule over the people for his rule is contrary to the mandate of Jewish law.

Then came the ANGEL OF DEATH and slew the slaughterer...that ate the goat...This is the Roman emperor Titus, who is held in contempt for destroying Jerusalem and the Second Temple, ultimately leading us to the present exile of the Jewish people. Titus is viewed as the Angel of Death for he was the initiator of our Diaspora experience, one that has taken the lives of millions of Jews.

Then came THE HOLY ONE, BLESSED BE HE, and smote the angel of death...that ate the goat... This is the commitment by God to reverse the actions of Titus. This commitment includes the establishing of a third and final commonwealth in Israel which will ultimately include the building of the Third Temple. This event will guarantee religious freedom and the ability for all Jews to live safely within the borders of Israel.

Approach 3 R . Moses Sofer (Hatam Sofer) "A Review of the Passover sacrificial laws in preparation for the Messianic Age".

One Little Goat, One Little Goat That My Father Bought... These represent the two goats brought by the congregation of Israel on the eve

of Pesah, the Paschal sacrifice and the Hagigah sacrifice.²⁰

.. **For Two Zuzim**....The Talmud relates that sacrificial offerings were normally purchased for two talents (zuzim) of silver.²¹

.. **Then came a CAT**...While each group was eating the Paschal sacrifice they would discuss the Egyptian experience and join in song to celebrate the redemption. The Talmud states that one who sees a cat in a dream will be involved in beautiful song²². Therefore to allude to this component of the experience the cat was used as a symbol of song by the author of Had Gadya.

Then came a DOG... The Paschal sacrifice could not be eaten after midnight, which is in the middle of the second third of the night. The Talmud relates that during this time period the dogs bark²³. The author is reminding us that the song and festive eating must be complete while the dog still barks.

Then came the STICK...A sign that the sacrifices were viewed by God with pleasure was indicated by smoke ascending from the altar in a stick shape fashion²⁴.

Then came a FIRE...Representing the heavenly fires receiving the “stick shape” smoke from the altar.

The WATER came and quenched the fire.... The rearrangement/removal of the ash on the altar (Trumat ha Deshen) was done on the morning of Passover. The priest that won the lottery to perform this first duty of the day would begin by approaching the kiyor (water of the laver), preparing for service by washing with water his hands and feet.

Then came the OX which drank the water.... On Passover day many of the Jewish people would enter the courtyard of the Temple waiting to offer sacrifice to God. The sacrifices were primarily oxen. The Mishnah²⁵ tells us that prior to sacrificing the animals they were given water to drink from golden Temple cups.²⁶ This event is symbolically mentioned in the above stanza.

Then came the SLAUGHTERER and Slaughtered the Ox...The Jewish people who participated in the sacrificial process.

Then came the ANGEL OF DEATH and slew the slaughterer...This is the nation of Edom (Rome) who took all of this away from us when they destroyed the Temple and Jerusalem.

Then came THE HOLY ONE, BLESSED BE HE, And Smote The Angel Of Death... Yet we have trust in God, who will destroy Edom and terminate the diaspora. This will once again enable us to worship, sing and prepare the Paschal sacrifice on the Temple mount.

B. ROLE OF HAD GADYA IN THE SEDER EXPERIENCE

The Haggadah is divided into three sections. The first section is recited prior to the Seder meal and focuses on the Egyptian servitude and our redemption from slavery. The first two psalms of Hallel are recited as part of this section. The second section of the Haggadah is juxtaposed to the Seder meal and confronts the experience of slavery and redemption by consuming various symbolic foodstuff, such as the eating of matzah, marror, haroset, the Hillel sandwich and for some, the consumption of a hard boiled egg. This section concludes with a meal and the Afikoman, a symbolic remembrance of the Paschal sacrifice. The Afikoman, like the Paschal sacrifice, must be consumed after one is satiated, must be eaten prior to midnight, and its taste must linger in our mouths throughout the night. The third and final section of the Seder which follows the meal, contains the final two components of the Seder, Hallel and Nirtzah. The Maharal, R. Judah Loew, explains²⁷ this section no longer focuses on the past redemption but looks to the final redemption, the coming of Messiah, the establishment of the third and final commonwealth and the rebuilding of the Beit hamikdash. Therefore, his final section begins with the pouring of a cup of wine reserved for Elijah who ushers Messiah into our world. Elijah is the emissary of the Messiah who Will bring the final redemption. As it states: “Behold I will send you, Elijah, the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day”²⁸

We open the door to welcome this event and recite the prayer of Shefokh Hamatkha, a prayer

consisting of four different verses, calling on God to destroy the Gentile nations which have persecuted the Jewish people throughout the Diaspora experience. As the Maharal²⁹ states, we request the arrival of Milhemet Gog u'Magog- the destruction of the nations oppressing the Jewish people. Following Shefokh Hamatkha, we continue with the final psalms of Hallel, a prayer which we began in magid but was interrupted by the eating of ritual foods and the Seder meal. It is important to note that on the first two nights of Passover there is a Rabbinic obligation to recite all the psalms which comprise Hallel.³⁰ The decision in the Mishnah³¹ to divide Hallel into two sections (pre/post meal) is significant. This division has led many to suggest that the Passover night obligation to recite Hallel is not fulfilled through the Seder. For the recitation of the Hallel psalms must be done in an uninterrupted sequential order and in the Haggadah psalms are interrupted by the meal. Many halakhic authorities³² urge both men and women to recite Hallel after the Ma'ariv service before the Seder to fulfill the halakhic requirement of reciting the Hallel psalms without interruption and with a blessing. However, halakhic authorities do not suggest that the Hallel in the Haggadah be arranged differently to allow its recitation in an uninterrupted form. This is consistent with the Maharal's conception of the Seder that all the Hallel psalms recited during magid are consistent with the theme of magid elaborating on the miracles of the Egyptian experience, while the Hallel psalms, left for after the meal focus on the future and final redemption. One only needs to read the Psalms of the Hallel section of Haggadah to realize that they all pray for, and elaborate upon the final redemption.

The final section of the Haggadah, Nirtzah, follows the psalms of Hallel. The Talmud asserts³³ that the fifteenth day of Nissan and the entire month is set aside in history as a day/time for redemption. In keeping with that tradition the poems of Az Rov Nissim and Ometz Gevuratekha relate the miracles which have been performed for the Jews throughout the ages on Pesah. They conclude with a prayer that this time period should usher in the final day of redemption. These poems are followed by Ki Lo Na'eh and Addir Hu which list the accolades of God, yet focus on the fact that God's name will only be complete when we have total sovereignty over our

own destiny enabling us to worship and serve God in our own land with the Temple rebuilt.

We then recite Ehad Mi Yode'a, which discusses the basic notions of Jewish faith. The principles enunciated in Ehad Mi Yode'a represent the ideals which unify God and the Jewish people, an act which will be complete in the Messianic era. Its insertion in this final section reflects the theme that redemption can only be speedily achieved when we are committed to the norms and mores of the Jewish tradition.³⁴ God's presence is visited upon us in direct proportion to our commitment to the values of the Jewish faith system.³⁵ Interestingly we find a custom that Ehad Mi Yode'a is sung to newlyweds on their first Shabbat together³⁶ Every marriage represents in miniature the larger hope of the cosmos which is an event of Messianic proportion which happens when there is a reunification of God and His chosen people; for God and the Jewish people are often referred to as each other's marriage partner.³⁷ (This is the reason we recite prayers for the redemption of Jewish people and for reunification with God within the marriage ceremony's Sheva Brakhot).

We then conclude with the poem of Had Gadya which on many levels reflects the idea of redemption. It closes the Pesah Seder because it is unique, not only because it highlights the rigors and commitments we must actualize in both our private and communal lives to achieve redemption, but because it is written in Aramaic. This language is not understood by the angels, only by God. Our future, which we have prayed for throughout Hallel and Nirtzah, is not to be secured by angels but rather by God. Therefore even Had Gadya's language stresses that God alone can hear our pleas and deliver us into redemption.

We can also understand the custom to recite Shir ha'Shirim after the Seder. The whole focus of Shir ha'Shirim is the love affair between God and the Jewish people. This relationship can only be fully actualized when we no longer live a Diaspora existence. Then the Jewish people will perform mitzvot within the palace of the king (Land of Israel), will be a true light unto the nations, and will gather daily to celebrate holidays in a rebuilt Temple engaging in song to God.

FOOTNOTES

- 1) See Encyclopedia Judaica, Vol. 7:1050: J.D. Eisenstein Ozar Perushim We-Ziyurim el Haggadah Shel Pesah (Israel, 1975).
- 2) She 'elot U-Teshuvot Chayim Sha 'al, Vol. 1, #28.
- 3) Introduction to the eleventh chapter of Sanhedrin Perek Helek, (page 121 in the Mosad Ha'Rav Kook edition).
- 4) Some suggest the Had Gadya (and Ehad Mi Yode'a) are sixteenth century piyyutim and have secular origins (See the Jewish Encyclopedia and the Encyclopedia Judaica s. v. Had Gadva as well as A. Scheiber, "The Hungarian Parallels of the Ehad Mi Yode'a" JQR 46 (1955/56). However this author has great difficulty with that. Refer to an article by Menachem Fuchs, in the periodical Osafot (5748) page 201 where he proves that earlier manuscripts of these poems have been found dating back to at least 1355 (if not earlier) which predate their secular counterparts.
- 5) Shabbat 12b.
- 6) Orach Hayyim 101:4.
- 7) For a list of commentaries on this poem see an article by A.M. Haberman, "Had Gadya" Alachanayim (Israel, 5721).
- 8) Based on commentary found in J. D. Eisenstein Ozar Perushim We-Ziyurim el Haggadah Shel Pesah (Israel, 1975).
- 9) See R. Moses Alshekh commentary on Genesis (XXXV:11:17); Esther Rabbah V:11:11 s.v. b 'Hodesh ha'rihshon (Vilna Edition).
- 10) This is an idea discussed within Kabbalistic literature. For a development of this idea see R. Joseph Haim b. Elijah al Hakham, She 'elot u'Tshuvot Rav Pe 'alim (Vol. I, Orach Hayyim,, Sirnan One and Sod Yesharim, Siman One).
- 11) Sefer Ma 'arnar Yonatan (Jerusalem, 5746).
- 12) Horiyot 13a.
- 13) Exodus V:2.
- 14) Horiyot 13a.
- 15) This idea is espoused by Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, "Kol Dodi Dofek" b'Sod ha' Yahid v-ha-Yahad (Israel, 1976) footnote 23.
- 16) Ta'anit 7a.
- 17) Baba Kama 82a; Megillah 31b; Mishneh Torah Hilkhhot Tfillah (chap. I).
- 18) Midrash Tanhuma Parshat Tazriya, Siman 11.
- 19) Yoreh De'ah, Siman II:1.
- 20) Pesachim (Chapter VI:3) Mishneh Torah Hilkhhot Korban Pesah (X:12).
- 21) Hagigah 6a.
- 22) Berakhot 56b.
- 23) Berakhot 3a.
- 24) Shabbat 145b; Yoma 38a.
- 25) Tamid, Chapter III.
- 26) As the Mishnah states this did not only happen on Passover but on all the major holidays when the Jews would visit the Temple.
- 27) Divrei Negidim, Page 155.
- 28) Malakhi, 3:23.
- 29) Divrei Negidim, ibid.
- 30) Pesachim 9:3; Jerusalem Talmud Pesachim (5:5).
- 31) Pesachim 10:6.
- 32) Tosafot Berakhot, 14a, s.v. Yamim; R. Ovadiah Yosef, Yehavah Da'at (5:34).
- 33) Rosh Hashanah (11b).
- 34) Sanhedrin 98a.
- 35) For elaboration of this point see The Kuzari, Ma'mar Bet, Perek 24.
- 36) This is discussed in the Yeshiva University Haggadah. Additionally, modified forms of Ehad Mi Yode'a have found themselves as part of wedding celebrations in various cultures. See A. Scheiber "The Hungarian Parallels of the Ehad Mi Yode'a" JQR 46 (1955/56) p. 355.
- 37) Shir ha' Shirim

Experiencing Yetziat Mitzrayim Through The Seder

Rabbi Meir Goldwicht

The most difficult mitzvah on the night of the Seder, more difficult than any of the other mitzvot, is, as the Rambam says, is to truly feel as if we are leaving Mitzrayim, as if we are actually going from avdut to cheirut (Hilchot Chametz u'Matzah 7:6):

בכל דור ודור חייב אדם להראות את עצמו כאילו הוא בעצמו יצא עתה משעבוד מצרים, שנאמר 'ואותנו הוציא משם וגו'. ועל דבר זה צוה הקב"ה בתורה, 'וזכרת כי עבד היית, כלומר כאילו אתה בעצמך היית עבד ויצאת לחירות ונפדית.

This theme runs through the entire Haggadah. All of the meforshim of the Haggadah ask: Why don't we recite a beracha on sippur yetziat Mitzrayim at the beginning of the Seder as we do before every other mitzvah? Based on the comments of the Rambam, which is so central to the Seder, we can answer this question very simply. At the beginning of the Seder, we are obligated to feel as if we are still enslaved, a state that is certainly not conducive to reciting a beracha related to our geulah from Mitzrayim. The moment we finish saying "בצאת ישראל ממצרים," however, the point where we actually feel ourselves leaving Mitzrayim, we recite the beracha of:

אשר גאלנו וגאל את אבותינו ממצרים וכו' ונודה לך שיר חדש על גאלתנו ועל פדות נפשנו בא"ה גאל ישראל

The Chatam Sofer explains that this beracha is the beracha on sippur yetziat Mitzrayim. We do recite a beracha on sippur yetziat Mitzrayim, but the beracha is recited in the correct place and in the proper state-of-mind— cheirut.

Adapted from Rav Goldwicht's Weekly Sicha, available at YUTorah.org

This obligation to feel as if we ourselves left Mitzrayim also explains why we drink ארבע כוסות. The Rashbam (Pesachim 99b) explains that the four ארבע כוסות correspond to the four leshonot of geulah mentioned by galut Mitzrayim:

לכן אמר לבני ישראל אני ד' והוצאתי אתכם מתחת סבלת מצרים והצלתי אתכם מעבדתם וגאלתי אתכם בזרוע נטויה ובשפטים גדלים ולקחתי אתכם אל הארץ אשר נשאתי את ידי לתת אתה לאברהם ליצחק וליעקב ונתתי אתה לכם מורשה אני ד'

These leshonot of geulah correspond to the promises Hashem made to Avraham Avinu at the ברית בין הבתרים:

ויאמר לאברהם ידע תדע כי גר יהיה זרעך בארץ לא להם ועבדום וענו אתם ארבע מאות שנה וגם את הגוי אשר יעבדו דן אנכי ואחרי כן יצאו ברכש גדול

Hashem told Avraham Avinu that his descendants would be subject to three stages of galut. In the first stage, B'nei Yisrael would be strangers in a foreign land. In the second stage, B'nei Yisrael would be enslaved. In the third stage, B'nei Yisrael would be subject to עבודת כרך, work of affliction.

Yetziat Mitzrayim was the reversal of this process. The first of the ארבע כוסות corresponds to the first stage of geulah, our redemption from the afflictions of Mitzrayim: "והוצאתי אתכם מתחת סבלת" "מצרים." The עבודת כרך, the "וענו אותם," was lifted, but the עבדות remained. The second of the ארבע כוסות corresponds to the second stage of geulah, our redemption from slavery: "והצלתי אתכם" "מעבדתם." The עבדות, the "ועבדום," was lifted, but we remained in galut. The third of the ארבע כוסות corresponds to the third stage of geulah, our redemption from exile in a foreign land:

וגאלתי אתכם בזרוע נטויה ובשפטים גדלים
We finally left galut. After geulah from the three-stage galut, we can experience the fourth geulah, corresponding to the fourth of the ארבע כוסות וגו'.

ולקחתי אתכם לי לעם וגו' והבאתי אתכם אל הארץ וגו'.

The ארבע כוסות also correspond to the four situations for which we are obligated to say birkat hagomel. The siman to remember these four people is:

י = יוצא מבית האסורים; ה = חולה שנתרפא; י = יורדי ים;
מ = מדברות

When we left Mitzrayim we experienced all four of these situations, obligating us to say birkat hagomel for all four reasons. We fulfill these four obligations by drinking the ארבע כוסות, each of which is essentially a birkat hagomel.

asked why we drink four cups of wine as opposed to any other drink. The reason, he explained, is that when someone drinks orange juice, for example, he finishes the entire first cup, enjoying even the last drop. He manages to finish the entire second cup as well, albeit not as easily as the first cup. By the third cup he is already sick of orange juice, and he leaves over part of the cup; when it comes to the fourth cup, he can only drink part of it. With wine, on the other hand, each cup is better than the first. It is only fitting that wine, which gets better with each cup, is the proper beverage for the ארבע כוסות, each one of which represents a level of geulah that is better than the last:

והוצאתי והצלתי וגאלתי ולקחתי.

It is for this purpose—to demonstrate our current departure from Mitzrayim—that there is a minhag to put out the nicest dishes on the night of the Seder, demonstrating the fulfillment of Hashem's promise to Avraham Avinu, " ויצאו ברכוש גדול." Another aspect of the table setting also demonstrates our transition from avdut to cheirut: there is a prevalent minhag to leave the table completely empty except for the Seder plate and silver cups of wine until " בצאת ישראל ממצרים" is read; as soon as the paragraph is read, everything

is brought out to the table, showing that now, as we leave Mitzrayim, we possess this "רכוש גדול."

The idea is that on the night of the Seder we must feel as if all that happened actually happened to us, re-experiencing as much of the galut and geulah as possible, allows us some insight into the idea of karpas. Why do we dip the karpas in saltwater? Galut Mitzrayim began because Yosef sold Yosef. The Torah tells us that after throwing Yosef into the pit, his brothers dipped his ketonet pasim in blood, leading their father to cry out, "טרוף טרוף יוסף!" Rashi explains that the ketonet pasim was made of expensive wool, as the passuk says, "חור כרפס ותכלת" (Megillat Esther 1:6). The vegetable karpas symbolizes the fabric karpas, reminding us of the ketonet pasim. We therefore dip the karpas in saltwater, symbolizing the brothers' dipping of the ketonet pasim in blood and reminding ourselves how galut Mitzrayim began. (Rabbeinu Manoach on the Rambam (Hilchot Chametz u'Matzah 8:2) in fact writes that the minhag of dipping the karpas in saltwater is a remembrance of the ketonet pasim that Yaakov Avinu made for Yosef, which was the underlying cause of our ancestors' descent to Mitzrayim.)

This is also why we break the matzah (יהץ) immediately after eating the karpas. The breaking of the matzah represents the breaking up of the family of Yaakov, which set the galut in motion. Once we understand the reason for the galut, i.e. the machloket between the brothers that caused the breaking up of the family, we can begin Maggid, essentially testifying to הקב"ה that we accept upon ourselves to do as much as we can to bring everyone in Am Yisrael together. Therefore Maggid begins with the announcement of " כל דיכפין " Let everyone who needs come and eat with us," inviting people who we wouldn't necessarily invite under normal circumstances to join us, or providing for those who don't have matzah or nice clothing for Yom Tov. Through this we show our willingness to help others shoulder their burdens. Immediately after יהץ, we begin to fix the rupture in the family of Am Yisrael by performing actions and making statements that express our togetherness. This includes bringing the ארבעה בנים together, not breaking the bones of the korban Pesach, and many other things.

Thus, at the end of the Haggadah, we arrive at the כוס של אליהו. In Tanach, Eliyahu is written without a ו (אליה) five times and Yaakov is written with a ו (יעקוב) five times. Rashi in Bechukotai (Vayikra 26:42) explains that Yaakov told Eliyahu that he would get his ו back when he would come to announce the geulah of Yaakov's children. Why did Yaakov take the letter ו specifically? Because ו represents chibur. This is why, whenever we deal with chibur between Jews, Eliyahu is present. This is why Eliyahu attends every brit milah, because brit milah creates a chibur between the generations. This is also why Eliyahu appears in many aggadot in Shas discussing Yerushalayim, because Yerushalayim is the place of chibur for all of Am Yisrael. So too, on the night of the Seder, we have a כוס של אליהו, which symbolizes our coming back together, our chibur,

fixing the split in the family that started galut Mitzrayim.

At the end of the Seder, after we have truly felt כאילו עתה יצא משעבוד מצרים, as the Rambam writes, we can say, "ונאמר לפניו שירה חדשה." How can we call this a שירה חדשה, when we sang the exact same song last year and the year before? This is the very point. We feel כאילו עתה יצא, and we can't help but spontaneously burst into songs of praise. For this reason, the Hallel of the night of the Seder is a Hallel said as a song, sung by people saved through the most miraculous of miracles from the most difficult and trying of circumstances. Such a Hallel is said while sitting, with an interruption in the middle to enjoy a festive meal, unlike the standard Hallel, because all of this is part and parcel of the gratitude we show הקב"ה.

Twelve Questions On Hallel On Leil HaSeder

Rabbi Dovid Hirsch

A close examination of the Hallel recited on the seder night reveals many unique qualities that distinguish it from the Hallel recited on other festivals. There are twelve questions one can ask regarding Hallel on the seder night.

1) The prayer of Hallel is usually preceded by a Beracha, for the halachah mandates the recitation of a Beracha before performing any mitzvah under the category of Bein Adam le-Makom (Rambam, Hilchot Berachot 11:2). Why then can no such Beracha be found in our Haggadah?

2) The Mishnah in Megillah 20b, which discusses the appropriate time to fulfill various mitzvot, includes the mitzvah of Hallel among those mitzvot that should be performed during the day. How then are we permitted to recite Hallel during the seder, which takes place at night?

3) Another characteristic unique to the Hallel on the seder night is that it is recited while sitting. This custom seems contrary to the general requirement to stand during the Hallel recitation, a requirement explicit in the Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 422:4).

4) An additionally troubling source is the Gemara in Ta'anit 25b-26a, which mentions that in order to recite Hallel, one must be fully satiated. Considering this mandate, it seems odd that the beginning of Hallel would be placed at the end of Maggid, directly preceding the meal, when it will certainly be recited in a state of hunger and therefore lack this prerequisite.

5) There is an even more basic question that can be posed when considering the arrangement of the Hallel in the Haggadah. We find that the first half of the Hallel is recited before the meal, while the other half is not recited until after the completion of the meal. How are we allowed to inter-

rupt the recitation of Hallel with a lavish meal at the seder?

6) The need to associate the Hallel of the seder with cups of wine, namely the second and fourth cup, is yet another unique quality of this Hallel that demands an explanation.

7) Why is it that women are obligated to participate in this Hallel (See Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 472:14), if they are generally exempt from positive commandments that are governed by time?

8) The decision to include the entire Hallel in the Haggadah, as opposed to a half Hallel seems puzzling when one reflects upon the distinctions that exist between the two versions of the prayer. For example, it is customary to recite only a half Hallel on the seventh day of Pesach because as the Gemara Megillah 10b says, "Ma'asei yadai tovim ba-yam ve-atem omrim shirah - My creations are drowning in the sea, and you are saying praise!?" The creations of Hashem, albeit the depraved Egyptians, were drowning following the miraculous splitting of the sea, and the Malachei ha-Shareit - Angels serving God were not allowed to sing the expected praise regarding the salvation of the Jewish people. It would therefore seem appropriate that we should similarly recite only a half Hallel at the seder in recognition of the Egyptians who were killed during the final plague, that of the First Born, and drowning in the sea. We clearly recognize the loss of Egyptian life, as the Abarbanel notes, through the removal of a drop of wine during the mention of each plague to indicate that the joy of our redemption is not complete due the affliction of the Egyptians. Why, then, is it the custom to recite the entire Hallel when commemorating this great miracle which involved the death of so many of God's creations?

9) It is well understood that the eating of the Afikoman should be completed before chatzot, for it commemorates the Pesach offering, which itself had to be finished before that time. There is a dispute between Tosafot and the Ran (Pesachim 27b Dapei Harif s.v. Garsinan) whether Hallel must also be completed before chatzot. They both agree that the recitation of Hallel is a rabbinic obligation. However, while the Ran assumes that the rabbis instituted chatzot as the final time to recite Hallel, Tosafot are of the opinion that it may be recited after chatzot. The Rambam, Sefer Hamitzvot, Aseh no. 157, implies that there is a Torah obligation to recite Hallel. Accordingly there should be a Torah mandated obligation to finish Hallel by chatzot. The Rama Orach Chaim 477:1, rules that it should be completed by chatzot. He gives no indication as to whether the obligation to complete Hallel before chatzot is a Torah obligation or a rabbinic ordinance, but based on the Rambam it is possible that he assumes it to be a Torah obligation. Assuming that there is a Torah obligation to recite Hallel before chatzot, one can ask: why should this particular requirement from the Pesach offering be extended to the Hallel recitation? What Biblical concept obligates the recitation of Hallel before chatzot?

10) The beginning of Hallel is preceded by a peculiar introduction, Lefikach anachnu chayavim le-hodot le-hallel... - Therefore, we are obligated to thank and praise Hashem. "Therefore" always serves as a bridge from one idea to its subsequent continuation. What is the continuation within the context of the Haggadah - between Maggid and Hallel?

11) An often overlooked obligation is that one must leave the matzah on the table for the completion of the Hallel. What is the need for such an obligation?

12) Finally, considering all of these unique characteristics of the Hallel of seder night, it would seem appropriate to include some reference to this unusual Hallel during the four questions, which are intended to bring our attention to the various unique qualities of the seder. Why do we find no mention of this unusual Hallel recitation in this part of the Haggadah?

There are two basic but very distinct approaches to resolve this series of intriguing questions. Each

approach can be used in its own right to answer many of the issues attached to the peculiar existence of Hallel within the Haggadah. However, it is only possible to answer all of these questions through the combination of these very different approaches.

The first of these approaches can be seen from Pesachim 36a, which explains Lechem Oni - the bread of affliction - as a reference to the matzah upon which we say many things. Rashi explains that these "many things" refer to the recital of Maggid and the full recitation of Hallel. Therefore, we should leave the matzah on the table for Hallel even after the completion of the meal. This indicates that Hallel is a component of the mitzvah to eat matzah on the night of the seder. [Rav Soloveitchik, zt"l noted that Ramban, Milchamot Hashem, Berachot 2b, is of the opinion that failure to mention pesach, matzah or maror, is a violation of the specific mitzvah that was neglected. Accordingly, if one did not mention matzah while reciting the Haggadah, he has not fulfilled the mitzvah of matzah properly. Rav Soloveitchik noted that based on the comments of the Ramban, the recitation of the Haggadah is a fulfillment of the mitzvah of matzah.] If this is in fact the case, it becomes apparent that the Hallel recited at the seder may not be subject to the technical conditions normally associated with standard Hallel recitation. For example, this particular Hallel recitation need not be preceded by a Beracha because the more general mitzvah of matzah is introduced by its own Beracha. Furthermore, the reason that Hallel must be recited at night now becomes clear; Ba-erev tochlu matzot - during the evening you shall eat matzot, for that is the appropriate time to fulfill the more general mitzvah of matzah of which Hallel is a part of. This similarly explains why this particular Hallel is recited while sitting, for that is the proper way to fulfill the broader mitzvah of matzah; mesubim - leaning comfortably.

Additionally, the apparent problem of interrupting the Hallel recitation with the meal can easily be explained if the Hallel is understood to be part of the mitzvah of matzah, and Hallel is subject to the guidelines and constraints of the established Pesach seder which continue throughout the meal. The guidelines of the seder include the presence of the four cups of wine, and, consequently, the Hallel must conform and combine

with this specific directive. The previously perplexing application of the deadline of the Afikoman to Hallel by the Rama, fits in beautifully with this approach that directly relates the Hallel to the matzah. Hallel must be finished before chatzot just like the matzah. It is therefore logical that if there is a Torah obligation to finish the Korban before chatzot, there is also a Torah obligation to finish Hallel before chatzot. Finally, it makes perfect sense that women should participate in the Hallel of the seder if it is indeed a component of the matzah. Women are certainly obligated to fulfill the mitzvah of matzah based on the Gemara in Pesachim 43b, Kol she-yeshno be-val tochal chametz yeshno be-achilat matzah - all who are obligated in the prohibition against eating chametz are obligated in the obligation of eating matzah. This also explains why we don't ask a separate question in the Mah Nishtana of "Why is this Hallel different from all other Hallel," because this Hallel is subsumed in the mitzvah of matzah which is already the subject of one of the four questions.

The second approach is based on Rav Hai Gaon, quoted by the Ran in Pesachim (26a Dapei ha-Rif s.v. Aval Rabbeinu Hai Gaon), who explains that there are actually three different types of Hallel. The first is the ritual recitation of the Hallel known as the Mitzvat Kriah which, according to the Ramban, Sefer haMitzvot, Shoresh no. 1, is our fulfillment of the obligation of Simchat Yom Tov. The second type of Hallel is Hallel recited on the commemoration of a miracle, such as the Hallel recited on Chanukah. The third type of Hallel is a spontaneous outburst of joyous and thankful song, Shirah. The Mishnah in Pesachim 116b explains, "Chayav adam lirot et atzmo ke-ilu hu yatza me-mitzraim -one is obligated to see himself as if he left Egypt." The Rambam has a slightly different version reading, "Chayav adam le-harot et atzmo ke-ilu hu yatza me-mitzraim - one is obligated to show himself as if he left Egypt." Because we are obligated on the night of the seder to view ourselves as if we are actually participating in the grand and miraculous Exodus, the Hallel of the seder, unlike the Hallel recited on other festivals, must fall into the latter of these categories. We can now begin to understand why this Hallel is so different than the one we are accustomed to and possesses so many unique qualities.

Rav Soloveitchik, zt"l, explained that the general reason that we recite Birchos ha-Mitzvot is to establish the proper frame of mind with which we must approach the fulfillment of God's commandments. In fact, the Beracha allows us to perform the mitzvah (see Rambam Hilchot Berachot 1:3). It follows, therefore, that this type of Hallel should not require a Beracha, for it is actually the sincerity of our mindset that initially motivated us to recite this spontaneous prayer. This also explains why this Hallel may be recited at night, for this emotional outburst is not limited to the technical time constraints normally associated with the ritual recitation of Hallel, but must be expressed at whatever time we become emotionally motivated. The Birkei Yosef ruled for this reason that although the Mishnah limits the time of Hallel to the daytime, a group of Jews who were saved from death while aboard a boat at sea were obligated to say Hallel immediately when they were saved, even though it was nighttime. Women would therefore also be obligated to sing this praise of Hashem if they too were saved directly by the miracle. Finally, with this new understanding of the Hallel of seder night, we can resolve the problem of reciting a full Hallel on a night that commemorates the destruction of God's creations. The principle of limiting our rejoicing while God's creations are being destroyed only applies when those rejoicing are not directly involved in the miracle, the sideline figures. For this reason, on the seventh day of Pesach, we only recite a half Hallel. However, on the seder night we are expected to feel as if we ourselves are personally being saved by the awesome plagues and miracles displayed during the process of our exodus from Egypt. Therefore, it would not be a violation but, on the contrary, an obligation to recite a full Hallel on that night, despite the fact that the Egyptians were being killed.

The Hallel that we recite on seder night is therefore categorically different than the Hallel that is normally recited. We are expected to not simply commemorate a great act of God which was performed in the past, but to allow ourselves to become enraptured in the seder so that we actually feel God's strong hand saving us in the present. The Ba'al ha-Maor writes that Hallel is intended to be said with a full stomach, and the Netziv writes that the real Hallel is the part following the meal, when one has been fully satiated. This Hal-

lel is that of Shirah and can only be recited after one has eaten. The two paragraphs recited prior to the meal function to establish the meal as a feast of Hoda'ah, thanking Hashem and giving recognition for taking us out of Egypt. The recitation of Hallel is performed after the meal.

This also explains the meaning of Lefikach anu chayavim le-hodot u-le-hallel. The Rambam connects the mitzvah of Sippur Yitziat Mitzraim with that of the recital of Hallel through the same word, "Lefikach" (Hilchot Chametz u-Matzah 8:4-5). The Netziv is of the opinion that Hallel re-

cited to commemorate a miracle such as Chanukah is only a rabbinic requirement. The Chatam Sofer holds that it is a Torah obligation to commemorate such a miracle. However, on the seder night we relive the experience, and, therefore, it is Hallel al ha-neis be-sha'at ha-neis -Hallel over a miracle during the occurrence of the miracle. The Netziv himself states that Hallel on the seder night is a Torah mandated obligation according to all halachic opinions. This is the meaning of Lefikach - because we relive this experience there is a Torah obligation to recite Hallel.

כח החסד והאמונה כהכנה לגאולה

Rabbi Baruch Simon

ברית של חסד קודם הגאולה

זהב מהמצריים. אמנם י"ל דכוונת רש"י ז"ל כך הוא, דהנה איתא במס' ב"ק (לו:): שור של ישראל שנגח שור של מצרי פטור, והטעם דכתיב (שמות כא, לה) וכי יגוף שור איש את שור רעהו, רעהו ולא של מצרים, א"כ כאן היה קשה לרש"י ז"ל איך נאמר לעיל 'דבר נא באזני העם וישאלו איש מאת רעהו' דהיינו מהמצריים, הא קי"ל דמצרי איננו בכלל רעהו, ועוד קשה הלא שם כתיב דבר נא ופירש רש"י ז"ל אין נא אלא לשון בקשה, ואינו מובן למה היה צריך לבקש לרכוש למו הון ושלל רב, אלא ע"כ צ"ל דלא היה ביכולתם לעשות כזאת אם לא אשר מקודם יכופו את יצרם לעשות חסד איש עם רעהו, ואזי עולם חסד יבנה, שעל ידי זה יתן ה' את חן העם בעיני מצרים וגו', ולפי זה קאי רעהו על ישראל ושפיר שייך בזה לשון בקשה. והשתא לפי זה מיושב דברי רש"י ז"ל כאן דכתיב ובני ישראל עשו כדבר משה שאמר להם במצרים וישאלו איש מאת רעהו, דהיינו שבני ישראל עשו חסד זה לזה ע"י שאלה, ועי"ז וישאלו ממצרים כלי כסף וגו' וה' נתן חן העם בעיני מצרים וישאלו, עכ"ל.

נמצינו למדים, כי בזכות מה שישראל עשו חסד זה עם זה, והיו שואלים חפצים זה לזה, בזכות זה זכו לביזת מצרים, שנתן ה' חנם בעיני מצרים וישאלו כלי כסף וכלי זהב ושמלות. והלימוד מזה כמו שנתבאר, שלא רק הגאולה בכלליותה באה ע"י מדת החסד והאחוה, אלא גם פרטי הגאולה, וכמו כן גאולת הפרט, ג"כ באה ע"י מדת החסד והצדקה, וכל המרחם על הבריות מרחמין עליו מן השמים (שבת קנא:).

כח האמונה להחיש הגאולה

עוד מצינו בפרשת בא סגולה נוספת לקירוב הגאולה, והיא האמונה בה', דהנה כתיב (שמות יב, יא) וככה תאכלו אותו מתניכם חגורים ונעליכם ברגליכם ומקלכם בידיכם ואכלתם אותו בחפזון פסח הוא לה', וביאר בזה המהרי"ל דיסקין וז"ל: פ"א אף על פי שנאמר אני ולא שליח והי' להם שם גילוי שכינה כמו דאיתא בהגדה של פסח, וקיימא לן דכל היכא דאיכא גילוי שכינה אסור בנעילת הסנדל, כמו ביום כיפור (עיין ברכות), וכן איתא במד"ר פ' שמות (סוף פ' ב') של נעלך כל מקום שהשכינה נגלית אסור בנעילת הסנדל, וכן ביהושע של נעלך, וכן הכהנים לא שמשו במקדש אלא יחפים, אפילו הכי כאן שהיה להראות האמונה והבטחון שהם מזומנים לדרך כדפירש רש"י, ע"כ אני מוחל ומתיר להם, עכ"ל.

הנה מפורסמים המה דברי הבית הלוי בדרשותיו (דרוש טז) שביאר ענין מה שמתחילים הסדר בליל פסח באמירת כל דכפין, שהוא כדי להתחיל הסדר בענין של צדקה, כי ע"י מצות צדקה זוכים לגאולה אף אם אין זכאים, וכמו שכתב בלשונו הטהור: דעל כן יש לנו להקדים תחילה במצות צדקה שעל ידי זה נזכה לגאולה, וזהו אמרם כל דכפין ייתי ויכול השתא הכא לשנה הבאה בארעא דישראל, דעל ידי מצוה זו של צדקה נזכה לגאולה העתידה בקרוב, וכמאמר הכתוב (ישעיה נב, א) שמרו משפט ועשו צדקה כי קרובה ישועתי לבא וצדקתי להגלות.

ועל דרך זה מבאר החפץ חיים (בספרו עה"ת פרשת בשלח) על הפסוק (שמות טו, יג) נחית בחסדך עם זו גאלת, דהכוונה לברית של חסד שכרתו ישראל זה עם זה לעשות חסד אחד לשני כדי להביא הגאולה, כדאיתא בתנא דבי אליהו (פרק כג אות ט) שכשהיו ישראל במצרים נתקבצו כולם וישבו יחד, משום דהיו כולם באגודה אחת וכרתו ברית יחד שיעשו גמילות חסדים זה עם זה, וישמרו בלבם ברית אברהם יצחק ויעקב וכו'. וזהו שאמרו ישראל על הים, 'נחית בחסדך עם זו גאלת', דע"י מדת החסד והאחדות נחית עם זו לגאולתם.

ע"י עשיית חסד זה עם זה זכו לביזת מצרים

ומצינו כדבר הזה גם בפרשת בא, איך שלא רק הגאולה עמצה היתה ע"י החסד והצדקה, אלא כל פרט ופרט בתהליך הגאולה, אף הוא נעשה בכח וזכות הצדקה והחסד שעשו ישראל בינם לבין עצמם.

דהנה הכתוב אומר (שמות יב, לה) ובני ישראל עשו כדבר משה וישאלו ממצרים כלי כסף וכלי זהב ושמלות, ויעויין ברש"י (ד"ה כדבר משה) שכתב לפרש שפסוק זה קאי אדלעיל, על מה שנאמר (יא, ב) דבר נא באזני האם וישאלו איש מאת רעהו ואשה מאת רעותה כלי כסף וכלי זהב, ויתן ה' את חן העם בעיני מצרים וגו'.

וכתב הגר"א בקול אליהו (פרשת בא) דצריך להבין מה חידש רש"י ז"ל בזה, הלא פשוט הוא שמה שנאמר 'עשו כדבר משה' הכוונה למה שציווה אותם לשאול כלי כסף וכלי

וההסבר בזה נראה פשוט, כי אמונה היא מלשון המשכה כמבואר בספרים (ע' ספר מלכי בקדש לרבינו יחיאל מיכל מזלאטשוב זצ"ל עמ' יא-יב), עד דרך הכתוב (אסתר ב, ז) ויהי אומן את הדסה, ועל כן נחוץ שקודם הגאולה יהיו חזקים ואיתנים באמונתם בה', ויהיו מראים אמונתם בפועל ממש, כדי להחיש עי"ז את הגאולה.

וכמו כן גם אנו, ע"י כח האמונה וכח החסד, שהם יסודות החיים, נזכה בעזרשי"ת לגאולה העתידה לבוא במהרה בימינו, ועוד בתוך הגלות נזכה על ידם לגאולה פרטית, כל אחד בנפשו הוא, להתקרב להשי"ת ולגאול נפשו מיד שאול, אמן.

וביתר הרחבה עיין בספר מעגלי צדק על סדר פסח להרה"ג ר' דוב צבי קרלנשטיין שליט"א (עמ' שסז) שכתב וז"ל והנה בשמות נאמר וככה תאכלו אותו מתניכם חגורים נעליכם ברגליכם ומקלכם בידכם וגו', ובגמ' יבמות (ו:): איתא איזו היא מורא מקדש, לא יכנס אדם בהר הבית במקלו במנעלו ובפונדתו וכו', ופירש רש"י שם פונדתו הוא ארנקו, שאוזר בו מתניו, ולדברי המהרי"ל דיקסין מבואר הכתוב באופן נפלא, 'וככה תאכלו וגו' מתניכם חגורים נעליכם ברגליכם ומקלכם בידכם', היינו אף דהני תלתא מילי נאסרו מדין מורא, כדאיתא שם בגמ', עם כל זה לא ינהגו כן, אלא ישבו כמוכנים לצאת לדרך, ולכן מתניכם חגורים ונעליכם ברגליכם ומקלכם בידכם.

The Sanctity Of The Home – The Message Of The Korban Pesach

Rabbi Zvi Sobolofsky

The central feature of the seder night, the eating of the Korban Pesach, is no longer performed today in the absence of the Beit ha-Mikdash. Nevertheless, Chazal saw it necessary to institute many practices throughout the night to keep the memory of the Korban Pesach alive in our hearts. The eating of Korech zecher lemikdash, the eating of the Aphikoman zecher la-pesach and the constant pleas for Hashem to rebuild the Beit ha-Mikdash are integral to our seder. It is incumbent on us to develop a better understanding of the significance of the Korban Pesach to enable us to appreciate what we are missing. Although the actual Korban Pesach is no longer a part of our seder, we can still incorporate its message into our seder and into our lives.

Most of the halachot concerning the Korban Pesach appear in the verses in the beginning of chapter twelve in the book of Shemot. There is a recurring word throughout these verses, drawing our attention to its significance. The word Bayit - home - appears in various forms thirteen times in the section regarding the Korban Pesach. Everything about the Korban Pesach revolves around the house. From its blood being placed on the door of the house to its meat being eaten specifically in the house, the Korban Pesach is linked directly to the Bayit. Even the members of one's group who eat the Korban Pesach are preferably one's family members who are referred to as "Seh le-veit avot seh la-bayit" (Shemot 12:3). What is it about the mitzvah of Korban Pesach that causes the house to take such a significant role in its performance?

When we examine the details of the halachot concerning the Korban Pesach, we find parallels to other korbanot. The Korban Pesach must be eaten within a certain area. Similarly, other korbanot are limited as to where they may be eaten. If meat of the Korban Pesach is removed from its designated area it becomes unfit to be eaten just as meat from other korbanot becomes disqualified, upon being taken out of its halachik

boundaries. Although similar in this general halachah, there is a basic distinction between Korban Pesach and other korbanot in the specifics. The boundaries of other korbanot correspond to specific areas in the Beit ha-Mikdash. Korbanot of higher sanctity cannot be removed from the courtyard of the Beit ha-Mikdash. Those of lower sanctity become disqualified if taken out of Jerusalem which is considered to be an extension of the Beit ha-Mikdash. Although the Korban Pesach cannot be taken outside of its appropriate boundaries, it is unique that its halachik borders are the walls of one's house. What is the significance of substituting the walls of one's home for the walls of the Beit ha-Mikdash?

There is another area of halachah that the Korban Pesach and other korbanot appear to have in common. All grain offerings, with the exception of the loaves of bread brought on Shavuot and those in conjunction with a Korban Todah, may not be made from chametz. The Beit ha-Mikdash essentially is free of chametz the entire year. Obviously the Korban Pesach cannot be eaten with chametz, but the absolute separation between the Korban Pesach and chametz goes even further. The mitzvot concerning owning chametz on Pesach are primarily focused on the Bayit. The negative commandment of "shivat yamim se'or lo yimatzei be-vateichem" (Shemot 12:19), and the positive obligation of "ach ba-yom ha-rishon tashbitu se'or mi-bateichem" (ibid 15) explicitly mention the significance of removing chametz from the home. The entire area designated for the eating of Korban Pesach is given primary concern to rid it of chametz. Even the time for the removal of the chametz is linked to the Korban Pesach. Chazal interpret the phrase ach ba-yom ha-rishon, which is the time given for removing chametz, as exactly the same time one can begin to offer the Korban Pesach. It is inconceivable that after midday on erev Pesach one could still possess chametz, as the Torah prohibits offering the Korban Pesach if any members of its group owns chametz. Whereas for other

korbanot it is sufficient to keep chametz away from the actual preparation of these offerings of grain in the Beit ha-Mikdash, the prohibition of chametz together with the Korban Pesach permeates the entire house. What is it about the Korban Pesach that grants the home such a unique status in halachah?

A fascinating discussion occurs between Moshe and Pharaoh at the beginning of parshas Bo. After having experienced seven plagues, Pharaoh appears ready to give in to Moshe. Pharaoh asks Moshe to identify precisely who would be leaving Egypt to offer korbanot to Hashem in the desert as Moshe initially requested. Moshe responds that all the men, women and children must go. There will be no distinction between the young and the old. Pharaoh refuses and insists that only the men who would be involved in the offering of these korbanot may leave. What was at the root of this disagreement between Moshe and Pharaoh?

From his vantage point, Pharaoh was justified in his response. If Moshe wanted to offer korbanot it was quite understandable to insist that only the grown men who would actually be involved in their offering should be permitted to go. Pharaoh was familiar with religious worship. There was an entire culture in ancient Egypt which revolved around religious service. What Pharaoh failed to understand was the fundamentally different type of religion that was about to be born. To Pharaoh, religion was practiced in temples by designated priests. There was no room for women, children and the elderly in the religious practices of priests in temples removed from one's home. Pharaoh couldn't grasp how a religious experience could include all the members of one's family. Moshe responded that avodat Hashem is fundamentally different. The ultimate avodat Hashem will revolve around the home and family. Every man, woman and child will be actively involved in this avodah.

We also have a Beit ha-Mikdash with Cohanim. Our Beit ha-Mikdash, however, is supposed to serve as a model for avodat Hashem in each of our homes. If the kedushah and taharah of the Beit ha-Mikdash remain aloof from our homes and family units, then our religious experience has reverted back to that of the days of Pharaoh.

The transformation from religion centering on a distant temple to avodat Hashem in one's home occurred at yitziat Mitzraim. A slave has no control over his family life. Pharaoh had issued decrees interfering with the creation of families. At the time of yitziat Mitzraim the Jewish family unit emerged. Central to the celebration of Pesach is the dedication of one's home and family to avodat Hashem.

The Korban Pesach is the korban which expresses this concept. Everything revolves around the home. Mitzvot that are usually associated with the Beit ha-Mikdash are practiced in every Jewish house. Blood of korbanot which is usually placed on the altar was placed on the doorposts of the home during the night of Pesach in Egypt. The walls of one's home take on the halachic status of the Beit ha-Mikdash. Chametz must be removed from one's home just as chametz has no place in the Beit ha-Mikdash. During Pesach the home is transformed into a Mikdash signifying the dedication of home and family to their central role in avodat Hashem.

The climax of yitziat Mitzraim is reached at the end of Sefer Shemot when the Mishkan - Tabernacle - is completed. The promise of "ve-lakachti etchem li le-am -And I will take you to me for a people" (Shemot 6:7) has been fulfilled as the presence of Hashem is visibly present with the Jewish people. The concluding words of the book of Shemot describe the Glory of Hashem resting on "Beit Yisrael" or the house of Israel. No other term to describe the Jewish people at this time is more appropriate. The House of Israel made up of all the individual houses of Israel has come into existence.

As we prepare our homes for Pesach and as we gather around the seder table with our families, let us focus on dedicating our homes and families to Avodat Hashem. May we merit the presence of Hashem in our homes and in the collective home of the Jewish people. May we merit the rebuilding of the Beit ha-Mikdash, enabling its holiness to permeate each and every one of our homes. May the Cohanim doing Avodat Hashem in the Beit ha-Mikdash inspire each and every one of us to live up to our calling as "Mamlechet cohanim vegoy kadosh -a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Shemot 19:6).

Introduction To The Text And Structure Of The Haggadah

Rabbi Jeremy Wieder

Rambam states that there is a positive commandment to engage in discussing the events of yetziat mitzrayim on the night of the fifteenth of Nisan. There is no specific formula which must be recited in order to fulfill the mitzvah, but there are a number of elements which must be incorporated into the retelling in whatever shape and form it takes. They include: 1) To speak of the miracles that occurred in mitzrayim; 2) To begin the discussion with the abject physical situation of the Jews in mitzrayim/state of spiritual impoverishment of the Jewish people in its formative stages;¹ and 3) To speak about the significance of the three foods eaten on the night of the fifteenth, i.e. the meat of the paschal sacrifice, the matzah, and the maror. Along with this, Rambam emphasizes that one must attempt engage the children in the discussion.²

There is, nevertheless, a long history to the idea of fixing a text of the "haggadah". Many of the sections of the haggadah used today are already mentioned by the mishnah and some of them were can be shown to have been in use on the night of the fifteenth while the Second Temple was still standing and the qorban pesach was being brought. Almost all of the material existed already by the end of the period of the Tannaim, even if not all of it was being used on the night of the fifteenth.

We present here a brief overview of the origin of the various segments which comprise our haggadah. Most, if not all, of the material has been

¹ This is an adoption of the geonic position to incorporate the opinions of both Rav and Shmuel as to the nature of the גנות in the mishnah's "מתחיל בגנות" into the text of the haggadah.

² Obviously, however, this cannot impede fulfillment of the *mitzvah* as one is obligated to perform it even if there are no children present.

distilled from Daniel Goldschmidt's seminal work הגדה של פסח.

1) הא לחמא עניא

This introduction to the הגדה, which in our version contains three unrelated sentences, is not mentioned in the gemara;³ some early medieval collections contained one or two sentences only, or contained them in a different order. Many versions, including that of Rambam, contained an additional sentence at the beginning: בבהילו יצאנו ממצרים, "In haste we left Egypt".

2) מה נשתנה

The Mishnah already speaks of the question of the מה נשתנה along with three answers, i.e. differences between the night of Pesach and other nights. From the mishnah it appears that the מה נשתנה was not the question of the child but rather that which a father would teach his child who was not astute enough to ask.⁴ This understanding is also clear from the gemara⁵ and during the

³ The expression 'כל דכפין ייתי ויכול דצריך ייתי ויפסה' is quite similar to the invitation Rav Huna use to issue before every meal he would eat, 'כל דכפין ייתי ויכול', (Bavli *Ta'anit* 20b).

⁴ The text of the mishnah reads: וכאן הבן שואל אביו ואם אין דעת בבן אביו מלמדו מה נשתנה הלילה הזה מכל הלילות ...

⁵ The gemara, *Pesachim* 115b, cites that Abaye (as a child) asked Rabbah about something which was done in an odd fashion on the night of the seder and he responded: 'פטרתי מלומר מה נשתנה'. From Rabbah's response, it is clear that it was his responsibility, not Abaye's, to say the מה נשתנה for the benefit of the child was not alert enough to ask; once Abaye demonstrated his awareness, the מה נשתנה became redundant.

geonic period as well.⁶ It is among the Rishonim that we first find the opinion that this is the question of the child, although the Tur and Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chayyim 473) adhere to the approach that the question is asked by the reciter of the haggadah in the absence of the child asking.⁷

The mishnah records only three “questions” (i.e. differences) in response to the question of מה נשתנה,⁸ the first relating to maror, the second to matzah and the third to the paschal sacrifice. As societal circumstances have changed (the absence of the qorban pesach; we no longer normally eat reclining on a bed or couch), the details of the responses changed.

מתחיל בגנות ומסיים בשבח 3)

The above statement is found in the mishnah. (Pesachim 10:4) Rav and Shmuel debate whether the גנות refers to the spiritual state, מתחלה עובדי עבודה זרה היו אבותינו, or the physical state, עבדים היינו לפרעה במצרים. The geonic practice eventually accepted both opinions and the text of our haggadah reflects this view.⁹

⁶ גנזי שכטר, כרך ב' p. 180.

⁷ See the *Ra'avyah* II, 163 and *Smag* #41 (positive commandments).

⁸ The text of almost all of the manuscripts of the gemara and mishnah contain only the following three questions:

שבכל הלילות אנו מטבילין פעם אחת הלילה הזה שתי פעמים
שבכל הלילות אנו אוכלין חמץ ומצה הלילה הזה כולו מצה
שבכל הלילות אנו אוכלין בשר צלי שלוק ומבושל הלילה הזה כולו
צלי

For a longer discussion of the individual statements, see Goldshmidt, pp. 10-13.

⁹ Goldschmidt suggests that these two segments are theoretically unnecessary since the core of the haggadah according to the next statement in the mishnah is the expounding on אבי אבד אבי (the passage which we might term as the “Torah’s Haggadah”), which itself begins with גנות and concludes with שבח. He theorizes that these two segments were originally alternative *haggadot* which the Amoraim wished to preserve along with the more standard midrash of אבי אבד אבי; hence he views these as “introductions” to the midrash.

First we recite the passage of עבדים היינו which begins with an approximate quotation of the verse from Deuteronomy 6:21. The paragraph of עבדים היינו concludes with the idea that it is laudable to discuss the Exodus beyond the minimum requirement which leads us into the story of the Sages in Bnei Brak who exemplified this model behavior. The story in Bnei Brak is found nowhere else in Rabbinical literature, although it finds a striking echo in the last chapter of Tosefta Pischea in a story which occurred in Lod involving Rabban Gamliel and the elders.¹⁰

Next the section contains the mishnah from Berakhot (1:5) which discusses the obligation to mention the Exodus every evening (זכירת יציאת מצרים), a mitzvah closely related to the specific obligation to discuss the Exodus at length (סיפור יציאת מצרים).

Finally, we have the midrash of the four sons, which can be found outside the haggadah in two places with a number of variants, some major and some minor. Both the Mekhilta (Parshat Bo, #18) and the Yerushalmi (Pesachim 10:4) contain this tradition. Both of those versions use the word 'טיפש' instead of 'תם' and the order of the children as well as the verses cited for each child vary within the two.

It is unclear however, why this midrash is placed at this point in the Haggadah. It may be that it originated as midrash to Deuteronomy 6:21 (עבדים היינו), which is the verse which begins this section and hence was included at the end. The section of עבדים היינו concludes with passage from the Mekhilta which expounds on the last verse cited in the section on the four sons, although the necessity for its citation, too, is not clear.

The second version of מתחיל בגנות is considerably shorter; it contains only the verses from the book of Joshua which are Joshua’s retelling of the story

¹⁰ Tosefta 10:12. The text reads:

מעשה ברבן גמליאל וזקנים שהיו מסובין
בבית ביתוס בן זונין בלוד והיו עסוקין
בהלכות הפסח כל הלילה עד קרות הגבר
הגבירה מלפניהן ונועדו והלכו להן לבית
המדרש.

of the Jewish people, including the Exodus and the entry into the land of Israel. Our haggadah ends its citation of the passage with the Jews going down to Egypt. The next two verses deal, respectively, with the Exodus and the entry into the Land of Israel, both which constitute the **מסיים בשבה**. That we omit them is probably a reflection of the fact that the primary fulfillment of the obligation to begin with **גנות** and conclude with praise is fulfilled through the midrash of **ארמי עובד אבי**.¹¹

4) The Midrash of **ארמי עובד אבי** and the additions to the Midrash

The mishnah (Pesachim 10:4) states:

ודורש מארמי עובד אבי עד שיגמור כל הפרשה כולה.

The core of our haggadah consists of such a Midrash, although our text does not complete the entire text of the parshah, but stops right before the verse which speaks of God having brought us into the Land of Israel. It is safe to assume that before the destruction of the Second Temple and the subsequent exiling of much of the Jewish people that the midrash continued to expound the next several verses, but that this material was omitted when it was no longer relevant.¹²

The Midrash in this form is not known from any early tannaitic collections (i.e. the Sifra, Sifrei or Mekhilta), although a number of individual pieces can be found in the midreshei halakah collections we possess, either on **ארמי עובד אבי** or elsewhere.

After the midrash itself (which concludes with the Ten Plagues), there are a number of additions to the Midrash which are not found in the geonic works or in the haggadah text of Rambam. These include the midrash of the plagues that the Egyptians suffered at the splitting of the Red Sea and the poem of **דיינו** with its abridged version which follows it immediately. These "tosafot" were considered optional; however, even those whose haggadah did not contain them may have recited them. R. Avraham b. HaRambam testifies that his father (despite having excluded them from his haggadah) nonetheless recited them.

¹¹ Goldshmidt, p. 17.

¹² Ibid. p. 30.

5) Rabban Gamliel's **שלושה דברים**

The mishnah (Pesachim 10:5) cites a statement in the name of Rabban Gamliel that one who has not recited these three "words" or "items" has not fulfilled his "obligation". Which "obligation"? The predominant view among the Rishonim is that the obligation referred to is that of **סיפור**.¹³ In accordance with this dictum, we recite the formulation of Rabban Gamliel's statement in the mishnah along with the expounding of the reason for each of the three commandments. The explanations found in our haggadah are taken from the mishnah, but appear slightly modified and expanded.

The three "items" of Rabban Gamliel are followed by the statement that every generation must view itself¹⁴ as if it was the generation of the Exodus and thus we are obligate to give praise to God for all of the miracles he wrought on our behalf. Most of the text of these two sections is found in the mishnah immediately following Rabban Gamliel's statment.¹⁵

6) Hallel and the **ברכת הגאולה**

The mishnah continues its discussion (Pesachim 10:6) with a debate between Beit Shammai and Beit Hillel as to how many paragraphs of the Hallel are to be recited before concluding the haggadah. Our text, not surprisingly, follows the opinion of Beit Hillel that we read the first two paragraphs. The mitzvah of **מגיד** concludes with

¹³ The Ramban? Raises the possibility that this refers to the mitzvah of eating matzah and maror (and pesach), but the placement in the haggadah certainly does not assume this position.

¹⁴ In many versions (including Maimonides') the word 'להראות', "to show", appears instead of 'לראות' ("To view"). This reading is the origin of the Yemenite practice of physically re-enacting the Exodus by ..???

¹⁵ The words "בכל דור ודור ... ואתנו הוציא משם" are missing in a number of the early (*Eretz Yisrael*) manuscripts of the mishnah. Goldschmidt suggests that this line was probably inserted from some *baraita*. The verse cited to prove this obligation is missing in some witnesses (סדור ר' סעדיה גאון, הגדה של הרמב"ם) and the words beginning with **לא את אבותינו** are not found in the mishnah at all.

ברכת הגאולה, "The Blessing of Redemption"; this, too, is found in the mishnah there where the basic form of the blessing is debated by the Tannaim.

7) שפך המתך

Before beginning the second part of the hallel after the meal, we recite several verses in which we beseech God to punish our Gentile oppressors. This practice is found in all communities, although the specific verses vary. The practice is not mentioned in the gemara, nor by the Geonim, nor by a number of Rishonim. Its origin is probably in the early medieval period (? Middle Ages?) (10th or 11th century).¹⁶

8) Conclusion of הלל and ברכת השיר

We then continue with the recitation of the הלל, until the end of Psalm 118. The mishnah states that upon the conclusion of the הלל we recite the ברכת השיר. What is the "ברכת השיר"? The Bavli records two opinions on the matter. R. Yehudah asserts that it refers to "יהללך" (the conclusion we usually recite at the end of the הלל) and R. Yohanan asserts that it refers to "נשמת כל חי". The predominant opinion among the Geonim and Rishonim is that the halakha follows Rav Yehudah; however, the text of our haggadah adopts the opinion of those who suggested reciting both. Many haggadot contain both concluding blessings (i.e. מלך מהלל בתשבות and that of ישתבה); however the common practice is to recite only one of the two blessings to conclude the הלל.¹⁷

In between the two alternative "ברכות השיר" the practice is to recite the הלל הגדול, Psalms chapter 136 which contains the phrase 'כי לעולם חסדו' twenty-six times. The origin of this is in a baraita cited in Pesachim (118a) which states:

תנו רבנן רביעי גומר עליו את ההלל ואומר הלל הגדול
Our Rabbis have taught: On the fourth [cup of wine] one completes the Hallel and recites the Hallel haGadol.

¹⁶ Goldschmidt, pp. 61-64.

¹⁷ See משנה and the שלחן ערוך אורה חיים סימן ת"פ סעיף א' and סעיף קטן ה' in ברורה.

9) Concluding פיוטים

The remainder of the seder consists of piyyutim most of which were not composed originally for the haggadah.¹⁸

a) הסל סידור פסה is a קרובה¹⁹ recited on שבת הגדול written by R. Yosef Tov Elem (11th century) which is first found in haggadot in the 14th century.

b) אז רוב נסים is a קרובה recited today on שבת הגדול (originally intended for Shabbat Parshat Bo) by Yanai (6th Cent.)

c) אומץ גבורותיך is a קרובה by HaKalir (6th-7th century) written for shacharit of Pesach.

d) כי לא נאה and אדיר הוא were songs not originally written for פסה but were songs which were sung on the festivals. The first connection to the night of the seder that can be traced for כי לא נאה is in the thirteenth century and אדיר הוא can first be found in the fourteenth.

e) The last two songs in the haggadah, אחד מי יודע and חד גדיא, which do not appear until at least the fifteenth century, appear to be modeled upon folk-songs.

With the advent of the printing press, and in more recent centuries with the widespread availability of printed books, major changes are no longer taking place in the text of the haggadah. Expansions on the text are done either orally or through commentaries. Once upon a time, the exhortation to be מרבה לספר ביציאת מצרים resulted in accretions to the text; today the text itself has become "canonized" (popularly speaking at least) and our being מרבה לספר ביציאת מצרים has been transformed into the exegesis of the text of our haggadot, the products of many centuries of the creativity of the Jewish people.

¹⁸ Goldschmidt, pp. 96-8.

¹⁹ A קרובה is a piyyut which was recited as part of the חזרת הש"ץ on special shabbatot. They can be found as part of the יוצרות which are still recited in some communities today on the shabbatot of the שבת הגדול and שבת הגדול.