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SHEMA KOLEINU: PESACH 5783

DIVREI TORAH FROM OUR REBBEIM, FACULTY, TALMIDIM, AND ALUMNI



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INTRODUCTION

Why Does “*Maggid*” Begin with an Invitation to Guests

Rabbi Michael Taubes ('76), Rosh HaPesihvah

The principle *mitzvah* of *Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim* on *Pesach* night is fulfilled during the *Maggid* section of the *Haggadah*, when we cite and expound upon numerous *pesukim* and *midrashic* explanations which describe the events relating to the story of our redemption from Egypt. In keeping with the idea that this story is to be related as a response to questions raised by a child (see *Shemos* 13:14), at the very beginning of *Maggid* the child (or children) at the table formally asks “*Mah Nishtanah?*” wondering why this night, the night of *Pesach*, is in fact so different than all other nights of the year.

But just before the recitation of the *Mah Nishtanah*, we actually commence *Maggid* with a brief paragraph in Aramaic, known by its opening words as “*Ha Lachma Anya*.” In that paragraph, we declare, among other things, that we invite anyone who is hungry to come and eat with us and anyone who is in need to come and observe *Pesach* with us. Why do we extend this invitation at this particular juncture, when we are about to detail how we became freed from slavery in Egypt? It is of course appropriate at all times to concern ourselves with the well-being of those who are less fortunate than we are; it is noteworthy that the Gemara in *Ta'anis* (20b) reports that one of the Amoraim used to invite hungry guests into his home on a regular basis using language very similar to that found here in the *Ha Lachma Anya* paragraph. Moreover, the Rambam (*Hilchos Yom Tov* 6:18) stresses that especially on *yomim tovim* there exists an obligation to see to it that the poor and unfortunate will be able to enjoy and rejoice on the holiday as well. But why do we emphasize this specifically on *Pesach*, and why at this point in the *Haggadah*?

In addressing this question, HaRav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik, *zt'l*, highlighted the fact that the Ramo (*Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim* 429:1) rules that there is a special custom in advance of *Pesach* to collect “*Maos Chittim*,” sometimes referred to as “*kimcha dePischa*,” meaning *tzedakah* funds to be distributed to the poor in order to enable them to buy *matzah* and other *Pesach* holiday needs. The Vilna Gaon there (*Biur HaGra*, *d”h u’minhag*) points out that this practice dates back to

Talmudic times, and he adds elsewhere (as cited in *Divrei Eliyahu* to *Parashas Bo*, *d"v h shiv'as*) that it is hinted at in a *passuk* in the Torah itself (*Shemos* 13:7) which suggests that one has an obligation to make sure that *matzah* is eaten on Pesach, apparently by others as well. It is perhaps to call attention to this unique requirement that we bring up the issue of taking care of the poor as we start the *Seder*.

The Rav then suggested an alternative explanation. Proper fulfillment of the *mitzvah* of *Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim* entails not only relating the story, that is, verbally sharing and retelling it, but also re-enacting and even reliving it. The Mishnah in *Pesachim* (116b), quoted later in the *Haggadah*, instructs us that we are all obligated to view ourselves as though we personally came out of Egypt. One way we accomplish this is by actually demonstrating our freedom and independence by means of a number of activities in which we engage at the *Seder* (see, for example, the words of the Rambam in *Hilchos Chametz U'Matzoh* 7:6-7). A passage in the Gemara earlier in *Pesachim* (88b) teaches that a slave owns no possessions since whatever he may have really belongs to his master. Consequently, a slave obviously has no right to invite guests to join him at a meal, as the food is not his, but his master's, and it is therefore not up to him to give his master's food away to anybody else. Only the master, only a free person, who has possessions of his own, can decide to share what he has with others.

By reciting the phrase in *Ha Lachma Anya* whereby we tell others that they are welcome to join us as our guests at our festivities on *Pesach* night, we are affirming that we are indeed free, independent people, and not slaves. On this night, we proudly assert that we are now masters, and we thus have every right to extend invitations to others to join us. Specifically at this point in the *Seder*, at the very beginning, when we get ready to talk at length about *Yetzias Mitzrayim* in response to the questions of the *Mah Nishtanah*, we publicly demonstrate first that we are now truly free people in every sense of the term, and that as such, we not only are concerned about the poor and less fortunate, but that we have the desire, the wherewithal, and the right to share what we have with others. The declaration of this invitation is in this sense a most fitting way to introduce the *Maggid* section of the *Haggadah*.

From Bondage to Bound

Rabbi Joshua Zahn, Head of School

“From Bondage to Freedom” is a title given to our *Pesach* celebration, since it represents our transition from slaves to free people. However, when reflecting on what *Pesach* represents, perhaps the more appropriate title would be “From Bondage to Bound.” *Pesach* represents and reminds us of the special relationships in our lives. The first of the *Aseres Hadibros* commands us “*Anochi Hashem Elokecha asher hotzeisicha mei’eretz Mitzrayim* – I am Hashem who took you out of Egypt.” Hashem could have pointed out that He created the world. Why is the command to believe in Hashem linked to *yetzias Mitzrayim*?

Through *Briyas Ha’olam*, Hashem established a relationship with humanity. However, through *yetzias Mitzrayim*, Hashem created a relationship with *Klal Yisrael* and with each member individually (see Ramban and Chizkuni). This highlights the role of *Pesach* in highlighting and celebrating our bond and relationship with Hashem.

Yet, the bonds that we celebrate and strengthen on *Pesach* are not only with *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*. The *mitzvah* of retelling the story of *yetzias mitzrayim* is captured through the phrase of *vehigadeta levincha* – and you shall teach it to your children. The *seder* night represents the continuation of the *mesorah*, sharing our story with our children, binding us together as links in a *mesorah*. Why is teaching the story to our children so integral to the *Pesach* celebration?

The *sefarim hakedoshim* suggest that Pharaoh and the Egyptians were fixated on destroying this sense of Jewish continuity. They tried to kill every Jewish baby boy. They offered to let the Jewish men out, but not the children. The Egyptians realized the key to our survival is our children. Rabbi Jonathan Sacks z”l points out, “What Moshe taught, and what the Jewish people came to discover, is that you achieve immortality not by building pyramids or statues, but by engraving your values on the hearts of your children, and they on theirs, so that our ancestors live on in us and we in our children.” *Pesach* is then a celebration of bonding and a strengthening of these relationships. We celebrate and talk about our bond with Hashem and transmit this cherished bond to our children, helping strengthen their bond to our *mesorah*.

We hope that the *divrei Torah* shared in our expanded *Pesach* Shema Koleinu inspire and deepen your bond with Hashem and our Torah! This *kuntres* is the result of the efforts of many individuals. Thank you to Yisrael-Dovid Rosenberg (‘23) and Yosef Weiner (‘23), editors-in-chief of our Shema Koleinu, Eitan Rochwarger (‘23) for formatting, Moshe Lieberman (‘24) and Yaakov Feldman (‘24), the executive editors, Aaron Sisser (‘23), Dovi Goldberg (‘23), Elisha Price (‘23), Eytan Sheinfeld (‘23), Gavriel Barber (‘23), and Natan Horowitz (‘23), the editing team, and Rabbi Shimon Schenker, Menahel, for leading this project.

Best wishes for a *Chag Kasheir Vesamei’ach*.

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*MECHIRAS CHAMETZ***Exploring the Intricacies of *Mechiras Chametz****Yaakov Feldman (24)*

The process of *Mechiras Chametz* is widely utilized in Jewish communities around the world, and has become a standardized part of the annual preparation for *Pesach*. Jews purchase *chametz* with the intention to sell it prior to *Pesach*, and some *poskim* even consider the question of whether it should be an obligation to sell one's *chametz* as part of the appropriate safeguards for *Pesach*.

However, there is a history of controversy surrounding the practice, and even today there are people who do not sell their *chametz* at all. Notably, the *Vilna Gaon* expressed his opposition to the sale of any *chametz* that was not sold permanently. Some have complained that the sale seems like a game: the *chametz* does not leave the original owner's residence (something some *poskim* insisted should happen); the purchaser does not appear interested in actually taking possession of the *chametz*; rarely if ever does the buyer actually attempt to eat any of the food they purchased; and the *chametz* always reverts to its original ownership immediately after *Pesach*. For these reasons, many describe *Mechiras Chametz* as a *ha'aramah*, a work-around or trick of sorts. The debate concerning this aspect of *Mechiras Chametz* is still very much ongoing, with some describing it as a problematic *ha'aramah*, some as a circumstantially acceptable *ha'aramah*, and some as not a *ha'aramah* at all. There are also those who feel that within the process of *Mechiras Chametz* there can be varying levels of a *ha'aramah*, depending on how it is performed.

This discussion can be found already in the earliest of sources. The *Tosefta* in *Pesachim* (2:6-7) speaks of a situation in which a Jew, finding himself stuck at sea as *Pesach* approaches, transfers ownership of his *chametz* to a non-Jewish fellow traveler, and reclaims it after the holiday. However, the case seems to be an obviously unusual and desperate situation that called for a one time solution, something far different than our utilization of *Mechiras Chametz* today. Some *girsas* of the *Tosefta* include while discussing the case the note that one would be allowed to engage in such a process "as long as he does not engage in *ha'aramah*". Various interpretations can be found as to the *ha'aramah* that is being referenced here. According to a number of *rishonim*, the intent is that this should not become a regular practice.

To some of the commentaries, this interpretation is suggested by the picture painted by the *Tosefta*, in which the scenario depicted is of an individual traveling on a boat when *Pesach* approaches; The impression that is created is that it is an unanticipated, unusual situation, and also probably necessary to preserve the livelihood of the Jewish traveler, again an attitude far different than what we experience today.

While this does seem rather troubling at first glance, there are many legitimate reasons for what we do today. The first concern mentioned above was the fact that the purchaser almost never actually takes possession of the *chametz* that they buy. At first blush, this does seem to be a serious issue for contemporary practice, as the *chametz* generally does stay in the Jew's house. However, this was reconciled by the Bach, among others, who asserted that it was sufficient to sell the room of the house where the *chametz* is, and to provide the purchaser with the key to the area where the *chametz* is located. He considered the providing of the key to be crucial to prevent the sale from being artificial, and also required that no seal indicating Jewish ownership be left in place that may dissuade the purchaser from entering and taking his purchased *chametz*. To that end, many require that the contract must also make it clear that the purchaser has the right to enter the property of the seller as needed to access the *chametz*. Another one of the objections raised *against Mechiras Chametz* is the fact that the seller almost always gets his *chametz* back after *Pesach*. It has been pointed out that it is important that *Mechiras Chametz* is not stipulated as a *matanah al menas lehachazir*, a gift that is given on condition to be returned. This is more clearly problematic than what we do today, which is buy it back as a new transaction from the purchaser. Additionally, to add to the legitimacy of the transaction, many are careful to only sell *chametz* to someone who can realistically put together the funds to buy the *chametz* in its entirety at the end of *Pesach* and keep it all. Above all, it is crucial that the *Mechiras Chametz* be treated without any cynicism or improper intentions. Despite what the realities may be, one should know that he really has no right to any sold *chametz* that may be in his house until it is legitimately bought back from the purchaser.

Hopefully exploring just some of the vast discussions surrounding *Mechiras Chametz* can add some valuable perspective to this routine we follow every year. Have a *Chag Sameach*!

PESACH KRIAS HATORAH***Yetzias Mitzrayim vs. Krias Yam Suf****Noah Segelnick (24)*

Throughout the holiday of *Pesach*, there are two major events that are commemorated: *Yetzias Mitzrayim* and *Krias Yam Suf*. Both of these events are so important that they made it into the *Pesach Kerias Hatorah*. We read about *Yetzias Miztrayim* on the very first day of *Pesach* and we read about *Krias Yam Suf* on the seventh day of *Pesach*. Even though both events are commemorated during the same holiday, there are some noticeable differences between them. One of these differences is that when *Bnei Yisrael* were leaving *Mitzrayim*, they were one unified nation; however, during *Krias Yam Suf*, serious divisions began to take place. *Chazal* tell us that when *Bnei Yisrael* reached the *Yam Suf* and realized that they were trapped between the sea and the *Mitzrim*, four different groups within *Bnei Yisrael* emerged. Each one of these groups came up with a different way of approaching the situation. One group thought that they should all commit suicide by jumping into the sea so that they would not be captured by the *Mitzrim*. A different group suggested that they give themselves up and return to *Mitzrayim* as slaves. The third group proposed the idea of fighting back against the *Mitzrim*. Finally, the last group came up with the idea of making loud noises in order to scare off the *Mitzrim*. As a side note, it is possible to suggest that the main cause behind this division was the level of *emunah* that each member of *Bnei Yisrael* felt towards Hashem. The first group had absolutely no *emunah* in Hashem which is why they wanted to commit suicide. The second group had slightly more *emunah*, resulting in them wanting to be re-enslaved. The members of *Bnei Yisrael* who suggested fighting back against the *Mitzrim* had even more *emunah* and thought Hashem would help them defeat the *Mitzrim* through battle. The final group had the strongest belief in Hashem which is why they only wanted to put in a minimal amount of effort, their *hishtadlus*, and allow Hashem to do the rest.

Another example of the division of *Bnei Yisrael* that occurred during *Krias Yam Suf* can be seen through a different comment of *Chazal*. *Chazal* tell us that when *Bnei Yisrael* were going through the *Yam*, they did not go through together as one nation. Instead, each

tribe had its own separate tunnel that led them through the sea. Additionally, the ten *makos* in *Mitzrayim* are compared to a finger while the *makos* that took place by the *Yam Suf* are compared to a hand. Rav Yossie Hagelili derives from these comparisons that there were five times as many *makos* that took place at the *Yam Suf* than there were when *Bnei Yisrael* were leaving *Mitzrayim*. These additional *makos* are another example of the increased diversity that was occurring at *Krias Yam Suf*.

Besides the divisions that began to take place at *Krias Yam Suf*, another difference between *Yetzias Mitzrayim* and *Krias Yam Suf* is pointed out by the Avnei Nezer. The Avnei Nezer explains that in order for *Bnei Yisrael* to leave *Mitzrayim*, they needed to perform specific *mitzvos*; Hashem commanded each man to get a *bris milah* and every household to bring a *Korban Pesach*. However, by *Krias Yam Suf*, *Bnei Yisrael* were not commanded to do any *mitzvos*. In addition, when *Bnei Yisrael* wanted to pray to Hashem, He told them that now was not an appropriate time to pray. After explaining this difference between *Yetzias Mitzrayim* and *Krias Yam Suf*, the Avnei Nezer proposes a reason for why Hashem did not require *Bnei Yisrael* to do any extra *mitzvos* at *Krias Yam Suf*. He says that if the *Mitzrim* saw *Bnei Yisrael* performing *mitzvos*, they would not have followed them into the sea because they would have realized that *Bnei Yisrael* would be protected by Hashem. So in order to ensure that the *Mitzrim* would march into the sea, Hashem commanded *Bnei Yisrael* not to perform any type of *mitzvah*.

While this idea seems straightforward, it is actually very difficult to understand. Why would *Bnei Yisrael's* lack of *mitzvos* have made a difference in the eyes of the *Mitzrim*? It should have been obvious that Hashem was protecting *Bnei Yisrael* after witnessing all the *makos* that He performed in *Mitzrayim*. One could answer that the *Mitzrim* thought that there was nothing inherently special about *Bnei Yisrael*; they thought that *Bnei Yisrael* were only being saved because of their *mitzvos*. However, the *Miztrim* believed that if *Bnei Yisrael's* *mitzvos* were taken away, there would be no difference between the two nations. That's why Hashem told *Bnei Yisrael* not to perform any *mitzvos* - in order to show the entire world that *Bnei Yisrael* are indeed inherently special.

This concept of *Bnei Yisrael* being inherently special is the main difference between a Jew and a non-Jew. Hashem chose *Bnei Yisrael* as His nation because of their essence, not just because of their actions. Rashi's comment in *Parashas Beshalach* can help explain this inherent special essence of *Bnei Yisrael*. Rashi explains that Hashem chose *Bnei Yisrael* as his nation because of their *emunah*, pure faith, in Him. It is this *emunah* that makes *Bnei Yisrael* special, not any specific actions that they perform. Hopefully, this idea can help teach us a very important lesson. We must keep in mind that while performing *mitzvos* is very important, there is nothing inherently special about performing them as if they are tasks waiting to be checked off. Instead, we must be cognizant of constantly supplementing our *mitzvos* with *kavanah* and a desire to serve Hashem in order to make each *mitzvah* meaningful in Hashem's eyes.

Zman Cheiruseinu

Daniel Toth (24)

[1] As we sit down at the *Seder*, momentarily beginning the *Haggadah*, even before the “son” (to whom we recite the *Haggadah*, “And you shall tell your son”) knows about the details of the slavery, the miracles, and the wonders of the redemption, a number of questions surface.

First, why was our redemption from Egypt so restricted? In other words, why was the redemption not endless? Why are we in exile today?

Logically, if the redemption had been brought by means of mortal action, this would be understandable. Just as man is capable of change, so, too, the effect of his actions is changeable. But this is not the case with redemption of the Exodus, for it was entirely executed by Hashem. Moreover, Yirmiyahu [2] states, “Hashem, the L-rd, is true,” meaning to say that all His actions are true, eternal, and unchangeable. Therefore, the Egyptian redemption should have been eternal, or endless, like His actions.

How then is it possible that today, thousands of years later, we are still in exile? Shouldn’t our freedom from the grip of the Egyptians still be clearly seen today? Instead, we are in such a terrible exile that in every generation, the nations rise up against us to destroy us, similar to the exile and servitude of Egypt.

Second, Hashem had promised the Jewish people that they would leave Egypt with tremendous wealth. Why, then, is there poverty among Jewish people today? This poverty is proven at our *Seder* tables, at which we invite whomever remains in a state of need and hunger.

Lastly, regarding the *Mitzvah* of the *Haggadah*, to retell the story of the Exodus at the *Seder*, we encounter a directive: “And you shall tell your son.” Here, “the Torah speaks of four children.” Meaning, at the *Seder* table not only is a Wise Son seated, but also a Wicked Son.

This poses a difficulty: The sinners in the generation of the Exodus were not redeemed [3]. Rather, these sinners did not leave Egypt. Thus, if there were no sinners among the Jewish people when they left Egypt, from where does the Wicked Son, a member of the

Jewish people, suddenly reappear?

Such questions are essential to satisfy our curiosity, for these questions disturb the collective momentum of the *Seder*, in which “every generation, a person is required to imagine himself as having, now, personally left Egyptian slavery.” Because we must relive the circumstances of the Exodus, “One should prepare a seating place so that he will be able to recline in a manner that reflects freedom, as kings and men of great stature do while eating.”[4]

In truth, the Torah is that of nothing but the truth. Meaning, since the Torah commands us to recreate a snapshot of freedom at the *Seder* table, a person must truly experience freedom. But, how can a Jew experience feelings of freedom whilst he finds himself in today’s exile? The Jew finds himself in a situation where, “they rise up against us to destroy us,” and there are poor people among us. Furthermore, there are some with “impoverished understanding,” including those like the Wicked Son.

If Hashem’s actions are to be titled “everlasting,” then why do today’s circumstances indicate differently?

Such questions are to be answered even before reciting, “We were slaves.”

In order to settle our curious minds, we begin our explanation with the paragraph, “This is the bread of affliction.” Now, this introduction is essential, for it clarifies the general point of the story of the Exodus which begins with, “We were slaves...”

The *Matzah* that our ancestors ate during the Exodus is called “the *matzah*,” which refers to “[what] our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt.” This calling is indeed necessary to stress the fact that the Exodus from Egypt was incomplete. Figuratively speaking, the Jews still lingered in Egypt. This brings explanation to the rest of the paragraph, “whoever is hungry... whoever is in need.” Though unfortunate, the reality is that the poor live amongst us, and “now we are here... now we are slaves.” This is unfortunate, for “our ancestors [are] in the land of Egypt.” Meaning, since the Jewish people did not entirely leave Egyptian slavery, a portion of us remain.

If so, what did the Exodus really accomplish? In response, we continue, “now we are here [but] next year in the land of Israel,” and, “now we are slaves [but] next year we will be free.” The truth? The

redemption from Egypt formulated the occurrence of the Coming Redemption, *Moshiach* [5]. This is hinted to by “Next year in the land of Israel... Free.”

Therefore, even in today’s day and age, we are capable of fulfilling the *Mitzvah* of recounting the story of the Exodus on this night, and the obligation “to picture.. [ourselves] as having, now, personally left Egyptian slavery” in the fullest sense.

As the Rebbe, *zatza”l*, explains:

“Indeed, by fulfilling the *Mitzvah* of recounting the story of the Exodus, and doing so “as having... personally left Egyptian slavery,” a person escapes the environment and slavery of Egypt, and becomes (next year) a free man. As known [6]: “From the time of the Exodus until the time of the Future Redemption, the Jewish people live in an ongoing state of leaving Egypt.”

Though it is a beautiful notion, that since the Torah is eternal, therefore, it applies to our lives even if they are very distant from its given Path, why must we experience such an exile altogether?

Chazal teach [7] us that Hashem gave Avraham a choice: “Which do you prefer — that your children be incarcerated in *Gehennom* or in exile?” Avraham, depending on one opinion, chose exile.

This indicates that the purpose of exile is identical to the purpose of *Gehennom*: Atonement of sin. Initially, the sin for which the Jewish people required atonement was the sin of the Tree of Knowledge. This sin was so destructive that it directly caused the *Shechinah* to leave earth and rise to the Heavens. [8]

Yet, six further sins followed which caused the *Shechinah* to ascend higher, from one heavenly sphere to the next, until eventually reaching the seventh Heaven. Accordingly, the required atonement needed to correct this sin was told only to Avraham, and therefore, he was the first to begin bringing the *Shechinah* back down was Avraham. In doing so, he brought the *Shechinah* back to the sixth sphere. [9]

In short, Hashem specifically told Avraham exactly how humanity can dismiss the effects of sin, which would finally bring the *Shechinah* down to its original setting before any sin. What was this great counterbalance? The Egyptian exile.

Moreover, had we been fit for a true redemption, the Egyptian exile would have been the one and only exile. Meaning, the redemption from Egypt would have been a complete redemption, “and neither Exile nor the Angel of Death would wield power over them [10] [ever again].”

However, the Egyptian exile did not bring a complete atonement. Rather, Hashem had to take us out from Egypt “with a mighty hand,”[11] relating to the Attribute of Justice. From the perspective of the attribute of justice and logic, the following claim can be posed: Since the Egyptian exile’s atoning effect had not yet been fully reached, it makes no sense for the Exodus and redemption to take place at all. Meaning, though this exile could have *theoretically* sufficed as the proper atonement, in *actuality* no such results occurred.

This notion also explains the following: “Hashem, our L-rd, took us out from there with a strong hand.” Meaning, Hashem Himself triggered the events of the Exodus. Though such a Heavenly act was directed from Hashem Himself, based on the condition of the Jewish Nation at the time, they were not truly deserving of a Final Redemption. As is known, the Jewish people in Egypt were enveloped in the forty nine “gates” of impurity. Had they remained within the soul-crushing grip of Egyptian culture for even one additional moment, they would have become completely unredeemable, G-d forbid.

The *Alter Rebbe* explains:

The Exodus took place in much hurry and in a sense of confusion, as the verse [12] describes, “the people fled,” “because the evil in the [animalistic] souls of Israel was still strong in the left part of the heart.”[13] Their redemption arose such hysteria because “the Holy One, the King of kings, revealed Himself to them.” This revelation of Hashem Himself took hold of their essential Jewish identity. Consequently, this chaotic mood could no longer be fooled by the spirit of foolishness, which conceals the truth and persuades a Jew that he can remain connected to Hashem even in this spiritually damaging situation. Therefore, “the people fled.”

A similar concept in Tanya: When an individual is faced with a test of faith, this test reaches the *chochmah* (wisdom) in his soul, even the Jews whose G-dly soul’s *chochmah* is in “exile” itself. Then,

“it awakens from its slumber and exerts its influence,” and they, too, surrender their lives, if need be, to sanctify Hashem’s name.

This is one reason as to why we say; “if the Holy One had not taken our ancestors out of Egypt then we, our children, and our children’s children, would be enslaved to Pharaoh in Egypt.” Meaning, if Hashem Himself had not directed our redemption, the Egyptian exile would have extended until the Jewish people had attained full atonement, which would only occur when Future Redemption would arrive.

We bring clarity to such a notion further the other opinion regarding “He begins with disgrace.” Meaning, “In the beginning, our ancestors were idolaters. But now the Omnipresent has drawn us close to His service.” In other words, “the Omnipresent has drawn us close to His service.”

With this train of thought, we may recognize how a Wicked Son can possibly exist also today, even after the redemption from Egypt. On a higher note, we can arouse a sense of warmth as to how it is possible that “in every single generation they rise up against us to destroy us,” and that the only way that such behavior does not eradicate us is because “Hashem saves us from them.”

As long as the ultimate atonement has not been achieved, the Jewish people are not entirely refined and cleansed of spiritual negativity, permitting the existence of the Wicked Son. Therefore, Hashem’s Attribute of Justice allows that “they rise up against us to destroy us.”

But, how was it possible that the Jewish people were so enveloped in the impurity and negativity in Egypt, so much so that they themselves stood in the way of them leaving Egypt?

In order to dismiss such a question, the author of the *Haggadah* continues:

“The Egyptians harmed us (*osanu*).”[14] Meaning, the Egyptians pulled the Jewish people down to a lower state than the Jewish people could relate to on our own. This idea is similar to the explanation as to why Hashem punished Pharaoh and Egyptians if they simply played their part of the story; “They shall be enslaved and oppressed.”[15]

One answer suggests [16]: The Egyptians were punished be-

cause they applied the Jewish people to bitter slavery, acting beyond the restrictions of the Divine decree.

If we have already concluded that the Egyptian exile did not bring complete atonement to the Jewish People. Why must it even occur? What is so significant about the Exodus and recounting its story?

In conclusion: The *Haggadah* states, “and built for us the *Beis Habechirah* to atone for all our sins.” Its meaning? True choice only occurs when the choice is not made for lack of reason, but is exclusively the result of the free choice of the one choosing. In other words, true free will is only significant when one chooses simply because he can.

The *Rebbe* continues: “However, only Hashem, in His Essence, can choose in this way, since nothing outside of Him is of any consequence to Him (nothing truly affects Him). From the perspective of Hashem’s Essence, ‘After all, is Esav not Yaakov’s brother?’ Only on account of the free choice of His Essence does He choose the Jewish people: ‘I have loved Yaakov and have rejected Esav.’”[17]

This is the essence and ultimate purpose of the exile and Exodus from Egypt. At their level then, they were unworthy of Redemption — “Esav is Yaakov’s brother”; “these [the Egyptians] are idol worshippers, and these [the Jews] are idol worshippers.”[18] But, on a deeper level Redemption is rooted in Hashem’s Essence, who chooses the Jewish people. For they are one essence with Hashem. Consequently, “I cannot exchange them for another nation.”

Now, we can also recognize how the *Beis Habechirah* operates in such “to atone for all our sins.” Atonement can be derived from the essential connection between the Jewish people and Hashem through choice. Because at this level, sin and transgression, from the outset, has no effect. This essential connection, then, also affects the very existence of the Jewish people. Meaning, even they themselves, though very spiritually low, become refined and succeed in cleansing their souls.

But, as this level of choice is bound into the restrictions of time, it must maintain an orderly and graduated process. During the time of the Egyptian exile and the Exodus, Hashem had to redeem them with a mighty hand. The revelation of the source of the re-

demption was revealed later, when Hashem “built for us the *Beis Habechirah* to atone for all our sins.” This also relates to the actual *Beis Habechirah*. For in the *Beis Habechirah*, atonement came not through slavery and suffering, but through sacrifices. For Hashem’s choice of atonement was revealed in the *Beis Hamikdash*.

This may very well be the deeper meaning behind the statement, “He begins with disgrace and concludes with praise.” At the beginning of the *Haggadah* and the story of the Exodus, we emphasize how the redemption was initiated from On High. It was as if the Jewish people, because of their level and lowly spiritual state, were unworthy of redemption. But we “conclude with glory” in describing how even down here, the truth is revealed: Hashem built the “*Beis Habechirah* to atone for all our sins,” as discussed.

By retelling the story of the Exodus, as it says, “a person is required to picture himself as having, now, personally left Egyptian slavery,” we will merit to witness that “in *Nissan*, they are destined to be redeemed.” Namely, “in *Nissan* they were redeemed, and in *Nissan* they are destined to be redeemed.”

As the *Rebbe* details: “The redemption will come from a place “completely exceeding the reach of any *isarus dilesata*, i.e., even beyond the reach of *teshuvah*.” And an awakening originating from this plane brings about that “she gives birth to a male.” Meaning, it will trigger a redemption that will endure, an eternal redemption, even when, “a man emits seed first,” i.e., it is initiated from On High. “Next year in the land of Israel” and “next year we will be free.””

As the Previous *Rebbe* explains [19]: “We do not need to wait, G-d forbid, until next year. Rather, the redemption will take place immediately, this month of *Nissan*. Then, automatically, next year, we will be in the land of Israel and we will be free. “We will sing to You a new song (in the masculine form) for having redeemed us and freeing our souls.””

May this Ultimate Redemption arrive speedily, in *Nissan*!

[1] *Likkutei Sichos*:

<https://firebasestorage.googleapis.com/v0/b/project-pls-eof4f.appspot.com/o/FLQh7DeDBDce899EOEx2%02Fpdf%02F492af6co-b74d-1ec-b9b6-15edd4afi77c?>

[alt=media&token=f46bf37b-7790-442b-a649-48d8576328f3](#)

- [2] 10:10
- [3] *Shemos Rabbah*
- [4] *Shulchan Aruch Harav*
- [5] *Sefer Hama'amorim* 5708
- [6] Ibid.
- [7] *Shemos Rabbah*
- [8] *Shir Hashirim Rabbah*
- [9] Ibid.
- [10] *Shemos Rabbah*
- [11] *Devarim*
- [12] *Shemos*
- [13] *Tanya*
- [14] *Devarim*
- [15] *Bereishis*
- [16] *Ramban*
- [17] *Malachi*
- [18] *Zohar*
- [19] *Sefer Hasichos*

KADDESH

What is the Seder?

Elitan Rochwarger (23)

After everyone finally sits down and is all ready to begin the *seder*, they open their *Haggadahs* and see that the first thing to do is make *kiddush* and drink wine. This is followed by washing our hands, eating a food item, and then splitting up the middle *matzah*. It almost seems that these first few actions in the *seder* are not essential to the actual *seder*, and are there for the *Yom Tov* of *Pesach* itself.

But, what truly is “the *seder*”? This all seems very familiar to what we do every week on *Shabbos*. So, are these actions part of the *seder*, or for the *Yom Tov* of *Pesach*? In addition, what would separate them from what we do on *Shabbos*?

To begin, we need to define what the term “*seder*” even means. *Chazal* give no mention to this term, and the first place it is seen is in later *perushim*. Rambam writes: “*siddur asiyas mitzvos eilu beleil chamishah asar kach hu*” (Rambam, *Hilchos Chametz U'Matzah* 8:1) and then goes on to list the events of the night. It is interesting to note that this usage of the word “*seder*” is very similar to that used by Rambam by *Yom Kippur* (4:1). In reality, both are *avodos*. By *Yom Kippur* it is the *avodah* of the *Beis Hamikdash*, and by the *seder* it is the *avoda* for *Pesach* night that everyone must fulfill. The difference between the two is that by *Yom Kippur* the *avodah* is a *de'oraisa*, and here it seems the order is just there as a tool to help us fulfill the *mitzvos* of the *chag* described by *Chazal*. This shows that Rambam clearly believes by this comparison that order matters by the night of *Pesach* just like the *avodah* of *Yom Kippur*. The *kiddush* at the beginning of the *seder* is not serving as an introduction, but rather begins the order. For *Shabbos*, on the other hand, the *kiddush* is there to allow you to eat the meal.

Furthermore, there is an argument in *Gemara Pesachim* (117b) regarding the purpose of the four cups of wine. Rav Chanan is of the opinion that for two of the cups their purpose is to be able to make *Birkas Hamazon* on after (similar to *Shabbos*). Rava disagrees though, and says that all four are for the *leil haseder*, and that they help us “re-live” the steps to freedom. It is very important to under-

stand that on the night of *Pesach* the four cups have an additional aspect that *kiddush* for *Shabbos* does not have. This is the idea of experiencing freedom through the saying of the text and drinking of these cups. On *Shabbos* (at least Friday night), the *mitzvah* of *kiddush* is done for “*zeicher leyetzias Mitzrayim*” with an additional aspect of “*oneg Shabbos*”. One can prove from here by *Pesach* that the *kiddush* of *Shabbos* also begins our meal, which contains “*zemiros*” and lots of *divrei Torah*.

Also, an interesting idea brought up by some of the *mefarshim* on the *haggadah* is that throughout the *seder* we eat all the opinions of what Adam ate from the *eitz hada'as* in *Parshas Bereishis*. These include wine (grape vine), *matzah* (wheat), and *charoses* (apple/fig). This is done to remove Adam's sin. This furthers the idea of having a *seder* the night of *Pesach*, since with Adam we are going all the way back to creation. We go back to the first sin committed by man at the beginning and throughout our *seder*. This is another aspect special to the *kiddush* and the beginning of the *seder*.

Every week when we say *kiddush* on *Shabbos* we are also fulfilling our *mitzvah* of recalling *Yetzias Mitzrayim*. On the night of the *seder* we have four cups to represent the four “expressions of freedom” - *vehotzeiti*, *vehitzalti*, *vega'alti*, *velakachti* - with regards to leaving *Mitzrayim*. As mentioned earlier, they are positioned throughout the order to help us achieve this *mitzvah* during the *seder* (not just for *chag pesach*). From this point we learn that the *Pesach seder* also serves the function of reminding us of this *mitzvah* that applies to our *Shabbos kiddush* each week.

On the night(s) of *Pesach* we are not just having a *seder*, but relieving the experiences of *Mitzrayim* and our exiting. Although *Shabbos* also has a *mitzvah* of recalling *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, then it is a “*zeicher*”, just a mention, whereas on *Leil Haseder* it is done more in depth as *Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim*, a full retelling of the story. Every *Shabbos* when we begin with *kiddush*, it reminds us of when we had *kiddush* at the *Leil Haseder* and how to properly do the *mitzvah*. This is a great lesson to learn and helps us understand the meaning of an act that is done every week throughout the year with extra importance.

The Four Cups: Our *Geulah* and What it Means to Us

Noam Steinmetz (21)

Many different reasonings are given for the four cups of wine that we drink on the night of the *Seder*. Perhaps the most famous of which is the reason given by R' Yochanan in the name of Rav Beniah in the Yerushalmi, which is that the four *lashonos* of *geulah* found in *Parshas Vaera*: 1. *Vihotzeisi eschem* - I will take you out. 2. *Vihitzvalti eschem* - I will save you. 3. *Viga'alti eschem* - I will redeem you. 4. *Vilakachti eschem* - I will take you. The *Netziv* writes in *Haemek Davar* that we had to build ourselves up from slaves at the 49th level of *Tumah*, to *Bnei Yisrael* worthy of receiving the Torah. First *Vihotzeisi*, the end of the harsh labor of making bricks, and our self-perception as slaves, which occurred when we got to the *Makkah* of *Arov*. While we were no longer forced to perform this backbreaking labor, we were still technically slaves, owned by another person and legally obligated to do what was wished upon us. This is why we have *Vihitzvalti*, after *Makkas Barad*, Pharaoh finally began to give us some respect, as he began to lose his control over us, thus making us no longer fully subject to him and saving us from our servitude. With *Makkas Bechoros*, *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* granted us our full status of freedom, thus fulfilling *Viga'alti*, and brought us to full *kedushas Yisrael* at *Har Sinai*, taking us as his own - *Vilakachti*.

Rashi at the end of *Parshas Shelach* equates these four *lashonos* of *geulah* to the four corners found on the *tzitzis*. What is the connection between our *geulah* from *Mitzrayim* and *tzitzis*? Rav Yerucham Olshin in the *sefer Yerech Limo'adim* brings the following answer from the Gemara in *Menachos* 43a, which tells us that the punishment for one who doesn't attach white strings to a four-cornered garment is greater than the punishment for one who does not attach strings of *techeiles*. The Gemara brings a parable of a king who told one of his servants to bring him a seal of clay, and the other a seal of gold. If neither of them bring their quarry, the servant asked to bring the clay will be punished more, since it is easier to obtain. Similarly *tzitzis* which is easier to obtain than *techeiles* should carry a greater punishment for not being worn. Rashi asks, why is it that we compare the *tzitzis* to the seal of a king? It must be that our

tzitzis serve as a seal of Hashem upon us, that we are not serving any other king besides *Hakadosh Boruch Hu*. The *Sefer Hachinuch* when talking about the *mitzva* of *tzitzis* says something similar. The reason behind the *mitzvah* of *tzitzis* is that every time we look down at our *tzitzis* we are reminded of all of the *mitzvos*. The *tzitzis* serve as a constant reminder of our purpose in this world, to carry out the will of Hashem to the best of our ability at every moment.

Many of our *mitzvos* are given in order that we always remember *Yetzias Mitzrayim*. Why do we need so many? The Ramban famously answers at the end of *Parshas Bo*, that before *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, many questioned Hashem's role in this world. Some didn't believe He existed, many of those who did claimed He doesn't know or impact the events of this world. However, when the world saw that Hashem chose his people and altered the natural course of the world, *Hakadosh Boruch Hu*'s existence and role in this world became clear to all. Not only did Hashem see what was happening to his people and take them out with an outstretched arm, but the many miracles He performed were declared publicly beforehand through Moshe *Rabeinu*. Who could deny such a thing? The Ramban adds that when we acknowledge the great miracle of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, we are acknowledging the everyday impact of Hashem in this world, that even the small things which appear to come about through "laws of nature" are repeated miracles.

In the words of the *Sefer Hachinuch*, "*acharei hapi'ulos nimshachim halivavos*" - after our actions, our thoughts and feelings follow." When we perform all the *mitzvos*, in particular the *mitzvos* of the *seder* and those revolving around *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, we are not just performing actions, rather we are building within ourselves a greater level of *emunah* and a deeper appreciation of our covenant with Hashem. We should all be *zoche* that when we drink the four cups at our *sedarim*, we should take it as an opportunity to grow closer to Hashem, and view our *mitzvos* as the seal of our service to *Hakadosh Boruch Hu*.

Please Drink Responsibly

Joey Greenfield ('22)

The *seudos* we in *chutz la'aretz* have on the first two nights of *Peasach* are called *sedarim*, since there is a methodical *seder hadevarim* we follow over the course of the night. One of the potentially under-appreciated *minhagim* that was included in this *seder hadevarim* is that of removing a drop of wine by each *maka*, when we say *dam*, *va'eish*, *ve'simros ashan*, and when we say *Rebbi Yehuda's* acronyms of *detzach*, *adash*, and *be'achav*. This *minhag* can be found in the *Rama in Orach Chaim* (473:7). The *Biur HaGra* sites an interesting *makor* for this *minhag*, which can be found in the beginning of *Yerushalmi Arvey Pesachim* (on 68b according to the pagination nowadays). The *yerushalmi* there quotes four *shitos* as to the reason we have *arba kosos* by the *seder*. The *Gra* sites the *shitas ha'raban* as the *makor* for removing the wine, which is that the *arba kosos* are to represent the *arba kosos shel puranus* that *Hashem* will give the *umos ha'olam* to drink *le'asid lavo*. (This *nevuah* can be found in *Yirmiyahu* (25:15); *ibid*, (51:7); *Tehilim* (75:9), and *ibid* (11:6), each *passuk* representing one of the *kosos*). Now, the *Penei Moshe* on the *daf* explains this *nevuah* as a *remez* to the *geulah*, and on the surface it appears that the reason why the *kosos* by the *seder* were modeled after this phenomenon is because both deal with *kosos* and *geulah*. However, there may be something deeper to this reason of the *rabbanan*, especially since this is the very place that the *Gra* says is the *makor* to remove wine by the *makos*. Now, one of the points that comes out from the four *pesukim* above is that one of the ways that *Hashem* represents His anger is using the *mashal* of *kosos*, specifically four. It follows that we could say that these *arba kosos* of the *seder* represent the anger that *Hashem* put out onto the *Mitzri'im* through the *makos*. If that is the case, then we are in effect drinking the very same *arba kosos* of *puranus* that are discussed in *Nach* - no wonder we diminish our *simchas yayin* by the *makos*, the very *inyan* that, according to the above, the *kosos* commemorate. By citing this *shita* of the *rabbanan* as the *makor* for the *kosos*, the *Gra* is warning us not to overdo it. While of course we are to be *be'simchah* and drink the drink of royalty, the *Gra* comes and tells us that these *kosos* in part represent the destruction of *ma'aseh Hashem*. We are

called upon to bear this in mind even in our happiest moments such as when we recall the great *chasdei Hashem* that the *makos* represented for us.

URCHATZ**Some Unusual Questions About Urchatz***Elisha Price (23)*

Just the same as all the other oddities we do on the *seder* night, as per *Shulchan Aruch* (473:6), the purpose of *urchatz* and *karpas* is to make the children ask!

An interesting matter to consider is if the children do in fact ask, is anything done differently? Do the children still need to recite *mah nishtanah*?

At first, this question sounds ridiculous - what does one have to do with the other? But the *Gemara* (*Pesachim* 115b) seems to validate this *havah amina*. The *Gemara* first tells us in the name of Rabbi Yannai's *yeshivah* that we should remove the table (there is an opinion earlier that says it is only removed from before the *ba'al habayis*, and the story that immediately follows this *halachah* suggests that we remove all the tables. It is unclear which way Rabbi Yannai's *yeshivah* held), and follows up with a story about a *seder* Abaye attended with his *rebbe*, Rabbah. During that *seder*, Abaye noticed that the tables were being taken away, and he asked his *rebbe* why this was happening since they had not yet eaten. Rabbah responded (without answering the question, seemingly) that Abaye had just exempted them from saying *mah nishtanah* that year.

Rashbam (*dibur hamashchil* "*patrasan*") explains that the idea of *mah nishtanah* is that if the children do not ask the questions on their own, we encourage them to think about these four fundamental questions by reciting *mah nishtanah*. But ideally, the children should feel compelled to ask on their own at any point in the *seder*. So it makes sense to say that if the children already asked the questions, we should not need to say *mah nishtanah*.

However, Tosfos (*dibur hamaschil* "*kidei*") limits Rabbah's ruling only to a case where the children then feel compelled to ask more questions. *Mah nishtanah* deals with more than just the dipping of *karpas*, so the children would have to ask more than this one question to be *yotzei* the *mah nishtanah*. Perhaps Tosfos would agree to Rashbam's understanding based on Rabbah's statement if the children ask all four questions. But if the children only ask the question about *karpas*, Tosfos certainly disagrees.

Another issue to call attention to is the reciting of a *berachah* on washing. Don't flip the page quite yet! It is true that *lema'aseih* we do not make a *berachah* when we wash during *urchatz*, but not everyone agrees to that.

The basis for what we do is in the *Shulchan Aruch* (473:6). But this is not the only opinion. Rambam (*Hilchos Chametz Umatzah* 8:1) lists the order of the *seder* as follows: pour the first cup of wine for everyone, say *borei peri hagafen* and *kiddush*, wash your hands with a *berachah*, then bring out the various foods needed for the *seder*.

At first glance, we could argue that perhaps Rambam is referring to *rachtzah*, not *urchatz*. However, the *Ma'aseh Rokeach* (8:1:1) clarifies and says explicitly that Rambam was referring to the washing that proceeds the eating of wet foods, namely, *urchatz*.

Furthermore, the *Maggid Mishneh* (8:1:1) comments that Rambam felt the need to order the *seder* even though the *Gemara* in the tenth *perek* of *Maseches Pesachim* had already done so and explains why Rambam left much of the *seder* out of his ordering: Rambam only mentioned the parts of the *seder* that were ambiguous in the *Gemara* (such as which *berachah* came first; the one made on the wine or *kiddush*) and about which he and other *rishonim* disagreed.

While on the topic of the *berachah* (or lack thereof) on *urchatz*, if you accidentally do say a *berachah*, according to the *Kaf Hachaim* (O.C. 473:107) you may still make another *berachah* at *rachtzah*. In such a situation, Rav Yosef Zvi Rimon writes (in a piece called "*Halachot of the Seder: Urchatz*", published on the VBM) that one should eat a *kezayis* of *karpas* so that their *berachah* is not *levatalah* (in vain).

And lastly, now that you have been hooked, we can deal with the fundamental question of why we need *urchatz*, why we must wash before *karpas*. Hopefully we will give a more profound answer - or at least more answers - than we may have heard when we were young.

As we may be familiar with, the *Mishnah Berurah* (O.C. 473:6) says that since washing before vegetables is not a normal dinner time activity, the children will ask, and that can lead into a

discussion about *yetzias mitzrayim*, which is a *mitzvah de'oraisa*. As mentioned above, it may also exempt us from reciting *mah nishtanah* during *maggid*.

The Netziv (introduction to his *haggadah*, *Imrei Shefer*) gives a more satisfactory explanation. He suggests that on *Pesach*, the goal is to try to imitate the customs and practices of the pre-*churban* world. In other words, we are supposed to act as if the *Beis Hamikdash* is still standing (with some exceptions - we still don't eat a *korban pesach* or anything resembling it, and so forth).

The Taz (O.C. 473:6) asks the same question as the *Mishnah Berurah* and Netziv but approaches it from a different angle. Until now, we were under the impression that we do not have to wash before eating wet food items year round, and this is a special occasion, whatever the reason for that might be. The Taz dismisses this entirely, saying that, in fact, we need to wash our hands before eating wet food items all year.

However, there is a curious question to be asked on the practice of *urchatz*: one is only obligated to wash for wet food items that they touch with their hands. For the most part, we eat our potatoes or whatever other vegetables we use for *karpas* with a fork. If a fork is used, why would we have to wash?

This question is very easily answered according to the *Mishnah Berurah*. He would say that this is further proof to his point: we are doing something completely out of the ordinary to ignite the curiosity of the children present. The Netziv can also evade this question by saying that since we are trying to recapture the feeling of being in the *Beis Hamikdash*, we are very careful with all the rituals of purity even when it is not strictly necessary to do so.

The question, therefore, only really applies to the Taz, and it seems he would have to agree that if you use a fork, you do not have to wash.

KARPAS **A Garden of Karpas**

Sham Sheffey (25)

Karpas is a staple at everyone's seder on Pesach. This is of course the process of dipping vegetables into saltwater. However, we must wonder: How was the vegetable chosen for *Karpas*? Some people use potato, some parsley, and some celery. How did this all come to be? There is a modern-day reason for using any of those vegetables. The Chasam Sofer says that his Rebbi, Rav Natan Adler, went to great lengths to ascertain this matter before coming to any conclusions. Rav Adler held that *karpas* is celery. Also another reasoning, this time for parsley, based on a *Talmud Yerushalmi in Sheviis* (9:1):

מהו כרפס שפנהרות. רבי יוסי בר חנינה אמר פטרסילינון.

What is “river celery”? Rabbi Yose bar Hanina said, “parsley”.

The Tosfos *Yom Tov* and the *Chayei Adam* write based on this, that it is a custom to use parsley for karpas. This goes for celery and parsley, but what about potatoes, which happen to be very common for karpas as well? The *Aruch HaShulchan* (473:10) says the Achronim mentioned that the custom has been to take *petrozilin*, yet, no one has been able to define what that actually is. Since they were unable to determine what *petrozilin* was, they used other vegetables, which today references celery and parsley. Still, what about potatoes? The reason why potatoes are used may be because one can fulfill his obligation with any vegetable. Also, the advantage of using *karpas* is only because of the previously stated allusion. On the other hand, potatoes are preferred for many reasons, such as not having to check for bugs and taste preference, to name a few. No matter what vegetable you use, a different vegetable must be used later for *marror*, because a person can certainly not recite a *bracha* on *marror* later if he filled up on it earlier in the seder (*Mishna Berura* 473:20). At the end of the day, although people use various different vegetables for *karpas*, you must always have in mind the *marror* you will be eating later.

Sameach Bechelko

Ezra Schechter (22)

In the *Seder* we wash our hands in *Urchatz*, and we then take a small piece of a vegetable and dip it into salt water or vinegar. This is seemingly a strange practice- why do we dip such a small piece of vegetable? Usually, after we wash we start our meal and eat a lot, but here we merely whet our appetite? The first *Mishna* in the fourth *Perek* in *Pirkei Avos* explains that someone is considered rich if they are *Sameach bechelko* - happy with their portion. If someone is happy with what they have, they have everything they need. Rav Moshe Weinberger suggests that this can be the idea that we should take away from *Karpas*: We have an expectation that we are about to eat a whole meal and then all we get is a little piece. The message is that a little bit is also good, and we should be happy with what we have. Sometimes in life we have visions and expectations of how we are going to do things, and then when we fall short, we feel bad and get down on ourselves. As human beings we tend to measure our success and even judge ourselves by testing if we are able to reach the expectations that we set. We look at the results, and if we made it to our predetermined destination, instead of looking at the journey and the process we must look at the effort that we put in. It is very important to have goals and aspire to reach great heights, but we have to be able to be proud of ourselves regardless of if we reach these goals. I heard the following story which truly changed my life: There was once a man who was having trouble making ends meet and was struggling to put food on the table for his wife and three children. The man heard of an island that was filled with diamonds and although the man really wanted to go, he did not have nearly enough money to afford a boat to go to the island. After discussing it with his wife, they decided that they would start saving up money for a boat to allow them to go to this island. After an even harder next couple of months, the family had saved up enough money to go on the voyage to the island of diamonds. The man said goodbye to his wife and children and sailed off for riches beyond his wildest dream. When he arrived at the island it was more than he possibly could have imagined! An entire island filled with diamonds!! The man screamed with excitement as he started to load his boat with as many diamonds as he could grasp. After filling the boat to the brim with this valuable gem, the man was ready to get back to his family to show them their new riches. He imagined the excited look on his wife's face as he departed the island sitting shoulder deep in diamonds.

Once in the sea, the boat started to fill up with water. The amount of diamonds was weighing down the boat and it was starting to sink! The man quickly started throwing the diamonds into the sea, valuing his own life over the stones, emptying the boat, diamond by diamond. When the boat felt stable again the man looked at what remained in the boat and was incredibly disappointed. There were only diamonds up to his ankles now - just a small fraction of what the boat was filled with before. The man started to cry and felt that his journey was a failure. What was he going to tell his wife when he returned with such a small amount of diamonds? They saved up money for months for this opportunity, and he botched it! When the man arrived home his wife greeted him at the dock and gave him a big hug. When she looked inside the boat to see how many diamonds he brought back she started to cry. The man felt very bad and started to apologize and explain what had happened. "I was going to sink so I had to throw the diamonds into the ocean; I had so many before and I'm so sorry" "What are you talking about?!" His wife excitedly cut him off "We are rich!!!". The man rejected her and continued to explain how he had failed since he left behind so many diamonds and even lost his own diamonds. The message from this story is this exact same message that we should try to take away from *Karpas*. The man in the story was so focused on what he missed out on and could not appreciate or be proud of what he accomplished! We are all like the man in the story. We always measure our success based on what we *can't* do. "I can read the *Gemara*, but I don't understand this Rashi" "I have a good job, but I should have a better job" "My kids are well behaved but they aren't geniuses" We tell ourselves all these things, and with the focus on the latter half of all these statements, it diminishes the accomplishment in the former statement. In Rav Shlomo Freifeld's biography, *Reb Shlomo*, it is told that after talking to his *Talmidim* about the importance of finishing the *Masechta* they were learning, one *Talmid* came over to him and said that there is no way he will be able to finish an entire *Mesechta*. He could barely read one line! The next day Reb Shlomo gave the kid a new leather-bound *Gemara Kesubos*, but when the *Talmid* opened it up he saw that the entire *Gemara* just had one page-*Daf Beis*. "This is your *Mesechta*" Reb Shlomo said to the *Talmid*. "Now go make a *Siyum*!" *This is what* Karpas is teaching us. We have to be happy with only a small piece of a vegetable, be proud of ourselves, and not base our success off of what we didn't do, but rather what we did do.

YACHATZ

Matzah's Positive Curiosity*Noach Spear ('23)*

At this point of the *seder* we deal with one individual *matzah*. We take the middle *matzah* and divide it in half. We then take the larger portion for the *afikoman* and place the smaller portion back between the other two *matzos*. *Matzah* was the bread *Bnei Yisroel* ate as slaves during their time in Egypt. Additionally, *matzah* is described later on as the bread eaten by *Bnei Yisrael* when they were leaving Egypt because they could not wait for the dough to rise. How do we reconcile these differing representations of what *matzah* is all about?

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, *zt"l*, has a beautiful idea that addresses this question and helps us internalize the twofold message of *matzah*. When we break the *matzah* into two pieces, those pieces represent the evolution of *Bnei Yisrael's* redemption. One piece is a manifestation of our time in Egypt, another represents our leaving Egypt. The *matzah* represents the bread of oppression, a poor man's bread for slaves. Yet, it also represents a manifestation of freedom, applicable when *Bnei Yisrael* ultimately leave *Mitzrayim*. The state of mind which *Bnei Yisrael* were in each time they were eating the *matzah* is what determines the essence of what the *matzah* is all about.

There is a very strong lesson here that is showing us what it takes for us to go through our own spiritual redemption on an individual and communal level. Our actions are not the only things that represent who we are. Our intentions and our feelings regarding events that surround us add to the makeup of our spiritual and intellectual selves.

If the mindset of our actions has such a significant impact on us then we must ask: do we really understand why we are doing something that we are engaged in? We must be self-reflective about what we see and do. We must have a positive curiosity about life.

This has important implications regarding how we view the people around us.

We must put a concerted effort into looking for the good within the actions of others. If we have the wrong intentions and focus on the flaws and weaknesses in others, we will never reach the

state of redemption that *Bnei Yisroel* experienced during the exodus from Egypt. Failing to seek out the beauty in another person certainly leaves a void within our character. Being worthy of redemption means, among other things, that we work on appreciating those around us.

The core character trait that allows us to focus on the good in others is humility. It is no surprise, then, that *matzah* at its core symbolizes humility. A poor person's bread, devoid of flavor and color, *matzah* is all about purpose, internal connection, and appreciation. The reason why *matzah* is chosen to represent redemption is because its foundation is humility. If we are appropriately humble, we will be worthy of redemption.

The first step in redemption, from both a *bein adam l'Makom* lens and a *bein adam l'chavero* lens, is understanding that everything is from our creator. We need to approach our connection to Hashem and our relationships with others with a positive curiosity, rooted in humility. In this way, we can turn our *matzah* of affliction into one of redemption.

חג שמח!!

MAGGID
Two Ge'ulos?

Shmuel Feuer ('23)

Every day we remember *Hashem* taking us out of *Mitzrayim* as we say it twice a day during *Shema*. On *Pesach*, we have the *sedarim* to recount in detail via *sippur yetzi'as Mitzrayim*. Had *Hashem* not taken us out of *Mitzrayim*, then we would still be enslaved in Egypt so it would make sense to remember this miracle every day and thank *Hashem*. The *Divrei Chaim* zt"l notes that there is a slight transposition in the wording of the *Haggada*. It begins by saying that we were slaves (*avadim*) in Egypt; it concludes by saying we would still be enslaved (*mishu'badim*). He explains that when it says slaves refers to physical slavery, while enslaved refers to the enslavement of the soul and spiritual confinement. Meaning, had *Hashem* not taken us out but *Pharaoh* would have let us go on his own, then although we would no longer have been slaves, we would still have been enslaved. This is coming to teach that we would have remained slaves of the soul.

Interestingly, when we were finally freed, *Hashem* didn't take us through the *Plishtim* as he didn't want them to immediately see war and be scared and want to go back to Egypt where at least they would be "safe." However, this seemingly doesn't make sense because by not going that way, we ended up in an immediate war with Egypt. They were stuck as on one side there was the *Yam Suf* and on the other side was the powerful Egyptian army. So just as *Hashem* saved us from the powerful Egyptian army, couldn't he have just done that to the *Plishti* army instead which would have been faster anyway? Some *meforshim* explain that the reason why *Hashem* brought us into an immediate altercation with our former masters is so that we would get final independence by beating them. The Jews had already been physically liberated but by doing this, *Hashem* freed them spiritually and emotionally. Leaving Egypt, we still lacked the emotional wherewithal to sever our slavery to our powerful masters. By killing the Egyptians in front of our eyes, *Hashem* gave us the ability to move forward. Sometimes in our own lives, we experience a similar phenomenon. We are sometimes seemingly unable to move forward and get through difficult situations. Perhaps

this is why *Hashem* guided us towards the Yam Suf where we were able to beat the Egyptians and they were able to see that they were not internally enslaved to *Pharaoh*, but rather to *Hashem*.

In conclusion, the reason why it is mitzvah to recount the story of *yitizias Mitzrayim* everyday is so we never forget its message: Our goal in life is to overcome the need to look towards someone else (*Pharaoh*) and to realize that true freedom, attained through doing *Mitzvos* and learning *Torah*, is serving *Hashem*.

Around the Seder Table

Rabbi Mordechai Brownstein

הא לחמא עניא

Translation of this expression is traditionally: ‘bread of affliction’. However, *Chazal*, basing their interpretation on the *passuk*, remark that it is A] ‘bread of the poor’ or B] ‘bread of conversation’. The Maharal explains both nuances. *Matzah* is bread of the poor because it is independent of external flavors – flavored *matzah* is disqualified. *Matzah* then is a symbol of independence and freedom. *Matzah* is also the bread of conversation because while reading the *Haggadah* the *matzah* is uncovered so the *Seder* conversation is over *matzah* much like *kiddush* is recited over wine.

The aforementioned opinion conflicts with the Ramban who explains that *matzah* is the bread of the poor because it was eaten in Egypt by our ancestors during slavery – bread of the slave.

Rabbi Moshe Cordevero, Rosh Yeshiva of the kabbalists in Tzvas before the AR”I, noted that the Exodus from Egypt wasn’t the final *Geulah* promised at ‘the End of Days’. So, *matzah* is the bread of the poor [bread of affliction] since the *Galus* journey has not yet reached its destination. Rabbi Cordevero said this in the name of his Rebbe, Rabbi Shlomo Elkabitz, the author of *Lecha Dodi*. Consequently, the paragraph ends with: “This year we are servants, but next year we will be free!”

מה נשתנה

The Rogotchover Gaon observed that the *mishnah* omits the fourth question about reclining. The answer is simple: In those days reclining wasn’t unusual so there is no need to mention it.

מעשה

The Maharal observed that the dialogue took place in *Bnei Brak* while the *Tanaim* reclined. This indicated that the conversation was not in the *yeshivah* for understanding the Torah, rather at someone’s home for the sake of the *mitzvah* of *Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim*.

We may ask then: Why is there no *brachah* on this *mitzvah*?

A] The Rashba writes that there is no minimum for even one word is sufficient. Without a requisite number of words there is no basis for a *brachah*.

B] The Tur writes that no *brachah* is required since the entire miracle of the Exodus will be fully explained in the *Haggadah* – no introductory *brachah* is necessary.

C] The Maharil notes that when speaking itself is a Torah requirement a *brachah*, which is just more speech added on by the *Rabbanan*, is never required.

D] The Maharal concludes that the *mitzvah* is to feel appreciation and that is internal. There is no *brachah* on internal *mitzvos*.

The *Haggadah* lists all the participants in the *Seder* of *Bnei Brak*! It appears that the idea is to teach us that Rabbi Akiva was a member of the group even though his ancestors were not enslaved in Egypt since he was a *Ger* [convert]. We can learn from this that once converting the *Ger* is a full-fledged member sharing in all the *mitzvos* and benefits of every Jew.

It is interesting that most of the participants in that *Seder* disagreed on the eating period of the *Korban Pesach*. Yet all discussed the *Haggadah* until daybreak even though some held the *mitzvah* of *Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim* – the *Haggadah* – ended at midnight when one could no longer eat the *Korban Pesach*. In other words, for some after midnight the conversation was only *Talmud Torah* while for the others it was *Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim*, the *Haggadah*.

This Halachic controversy has practical application. The Rambam writes that the *mitzvah* of the *Haggadah* lasts throughout the night, though *Tosafos* rules in favor of Rabbi Eliezer that the *mitzvah* ends at midnight which is the end of the eating period of the *Korban Pesach*. It is therefore mandatory to eat the *Afikoman* before midnight, as we all do.

גר, ועבדות, וענו

These three terms describe the three stages of the Egyptian Exile. 1] First chronologically the reckoning begins with the birth of Yitzchak, 2] slavery began at the passing on of the 12 brothers, and 3] Miriam, meaning bitters, indicates the last 86 years of the exile.

צא ולמד

Go forth and inquire! What is the inquiry?

Hashem does miraculous things constantly and because they are constant, we take them for granted hardly noticing them, not appreciating them. However, when something out of the ordinary happens we then take notice. The Torah made this a point, something not noticed in its time, to make us aware of all the miracles that surround us daily.

ויציאנו

מלאך=מכאל

שרף=גבריאל, שר האש

מכת בכורות

The Rokeach asks why there is no *mitzvah* to redeem the female firstborn as there is *Pidyon Bechor*? The answer is: The male *bechor* was in danger since *Satan* argued that both Jew and Gentile worshipped idols why redeem the Jew and have the Gentile perish. It was because of the merit of women that we were freed. Women do not need to be redeemed. They were the redeemers!

MAASEH SHEHIYAH BNEI BRAK
Bringing Bnei Brak Into Our Homes

Isaac Cohen (23)

There are many questions associated with this part of *Maggid*. First, why is this incident told over here? The *Abarbanel* says that this story is placed here in order to prove what the *Haggadah* had just said previously. First, that even if we were all *chachamim*, we would still be obligated to tell the story of *Yetziat Mitzrayim*. Second, that whoever discusses *Yetziat Mitzrayim* at great length is deemed praiseworthy. The *Chida* brings another approach to this question. The story demonstrates that even Jews whose ancestors were not enslaved in *Mitzrayim* are still obligated to discuss *Yetziat Mitzrayim*. This refers to the members of *Shevet Levi* and converts. In this story, Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah and Rabbi Tarphon were *kohanim*, Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Yehoshua were *levi'im*, and Rabbi Akiva came from a family of converts (*Simchas Haregel*).

Another obvious question that arises from this story is how could Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah and Rabbi Akiva have discussed *Yetziat Mitzrayim* all night? The *Imrei Shefer* says that it is true that Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah and Rabbi Akiva held that the Korban Pesach may only be eaten until midnight. Even further, Rabbi Eliezer states that there is no obligation to discuss *Yetziat Mitzrayim* after midnight. Nevertheless, we find that Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah and Rabbi Akiva continued to discuss *Yetziat Mitzrayim* throughout the night.

Another question we find from this story is why are the Rabbinim mentioned in this specific order? In addition, what is the significance of knowing that the *seder* took place in *Benei Brak*? The *Likutei Ta'amim Uminhagim* states that Rabbi Akiva was the Rabbi of *Benei Brak*. However, Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Yehoshua are mentioned before him because they were his teachers. Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah is mentioned before Rabbi Akiva due to his great status and title as *Nasi*. Although Rabbi Tarfon was one of Rabbi Akiva's teachers, he later became of equal standing to Rabbi Akiva. As the *seder* took place in Rabbi Akiva's town, Rabbi Akiva is mentioned first.

Towards the end of the story, the students of the *Rebbeim* present at the *seder* announce to their teachers that it is time to recite

the *Krias Shema*. At first glance, it may seem like if it were not for the announcement made by the students, their *Rebbeim* would have missed the recitation of the *Krias Shema*. How could such a silly interpretation be conceivable?

The *Talmud Yerushalmi* states that a person whose life is dedicated to *Torah* study is exempt from reading of the *Shema* (*Brachos* 1:2). Since discussing *Yetzias Mitzrayim* is a form of *Torah* study, the sages were exempt from the recitation of the *Krias Shema*, but the students, who were not yet at the level of *toraso umnaso*, were still required to recite *Krias Shema*.

On *Pesach* night, a person is not merely obligated to retell the story of *Yetzias Misrayim*, but he must *discuss* it, teach it, to others. Hence, the sages were not able to be on the same level of *Torah* study they are on on an ordinary night, but obligated to focus their studies downwards, towards the level of their students. Therefore, once they find themselves closer to the level of their students, they are now obligated to recite *Krias Shema*, just like their students. May this year's *Pesach* be told as vividly as the one in *Bnei Brak Hashanah Haba'ah BeYerushalayim*.

ARBA BANIM**Including All of the *Arba Banim* on *Seder* Night** *Aryeh Klein ('22)*

As the *Seder* continues through the long process of *maggid*, we reach the portion of the *arba banim*. There is a short disagreement as to which person should read which son, but of course it is all in good fun. However, what is the true meaning of the strange mentioning of four different sons?

To answer this question, one should examine the four *pesukim* in the *Torah* where the *Torah* commands the *Mitzvah* of telling over the exodus to one's children.

יהיה כִּי-יֹאמְרוּ אֵלֵיכֶם בְּנֵיכֶם מַה הָעֲבָדָה הַזֹּאת לָכֶם:

And when your children ask you, 'What do you mean by this rite?' (*Shemos* 12:26)

וְהִגַּדְתָּ לְבֶנְךָ בְּיוֹם הַהוּא לֵאמֹר בַּעֲבוּר זֶה עָשָׂה ה' לִי בְצֵאתִי מִמִּצְרַיִם:

And you shall explain to your son on that day, 'It is because of what Hashem did for me when I went free from Egypt.' (*Shemos* 13:8)

וְהָיָה כִּי-יִשְׁאַלְךָ בֶּןְךָ מָחָר לֵאמֹר מָה -זֹאת וְאָמַרְתָּ אֵלָיו בַּחֲזֶק יָד הוֹצֵאתָנוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים:

And when, in time to come, your son asks you, saying, 'What does this mean?' you shall say to him, 'It was with a mighty hand that Hashem brought us out from Egypt, the house of bondage. (*Shemos* 13:14)

כִּי-יִשְׁאַל בֶּןְךָ מָחָר לֵאמֹר מַה הָעֵדֻת וְהַחֲקִים וְהַמִּשְׁפָּטִים אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה' אֱלֹקֵינוּ אֲתָכֶם:

When, in time to come, your children ask you, "What mean the decrees, laws, and rules that Hashem has enjoined upon you?" (*Devarim* 6:20)

Shown above are four times in the *Torah* (the top one taken from the laining on the first day of *Pesach*) where the *Torah* hints to the magid section of the seder. These four mentions actually correspond to the four sons at the seder according to the *Medrash Tanchuma*. The four sons are the *rasha*, the *she'aino yodei'a lishol*, the *tam*,

and the *chacham*. What is the *Torah* trying to teach us by having this representation of the four sons in the *Torah*?

Before answering that question, we must first ask a different question, namely what are the *arba banim*? What do they represent?

The *arba banim* according to the *Medrash Tanchuma* are four personalities or approaches to Judaism. Each son has a different connection to Judaism.

What the *Torah* is trying to teach us by hinting to the four sons, and giving a specific answer four times (except to the *she'aino yodei'a lishol*, whom the *Medrash Tanchuma* notes does not get an answer as a result of their not having posed a question) is this: no matter how connected or disconnected one is in Judaism, whether they feel spiritually connected and are a practicing Jew, or don't associate with their Jewish roots, it is important that we make them feel included. Just as we answer the *chacham*, so too we answer the *rasha* and all in between, each in their own way.

This unique answer given to each child is an attempt to include them in Judaism, no matter how connected or disconnected they currently are. This is echoed in the *passuk* from *Mishlei* "educate the boy based on his path" (22:6). There are times in our lives where we feel so connected with God, yet there are also times where we struggle with our beliefs. Sometimes we feel like the *chacham*, however, other times we may feel like the *rasha*. Perhaps we don't understand how to connect with God; in those times maybe we are the *tam*, or the *she'aino yodei'a lishol*. Whatever the case, it is important to remember that all these personalities and approaches deserve a seat at the table and a unique response. However, no matter the response, we tell each son that God brought **us** out of Egypt. So as your family argues about who will read each son, remember, that these are just four different connections to God, and that all are part of the Jewish People, part of *Am Yisrael*. Let us all be inclusive of all types of Jews and answer their questions in the best way possible; specific to them.

The *Rasha* and Involving Ourselves in *Mitzvos*

Natan Gemal ('23)

During *Maggid* we read about the 4 sons: the *chacham*, the *rasha*, the simple son, and the son who does not know how to ask questions. The *Haggadah* gives instructions based on 4 *pesukim* on how to teach each of them the story of *Pesach*.

The *rasha* asks about *Yetzias Mitzrayim* in a way excluding himself, saying "you" and not "us", and the *Haggadah* says that you should "*hakheih es shinav*", blunt his teeth, since he is a *kofer be'ikar* for this.

This seems unusual, though, because in the response to the other three sons there was never a physical reaction but rather a verbal response to the respective question. Why does the *Haggadah* go out of its way and say to blunt the son's teeth? Is this really necessary?

Rabbi Ovadia Yosef *zt"l* gives a beautiful interpretation of the response to the *rasha*. He says that the *rasha* is uninterested in all of the seemingly random and boring ritual activities we are performing at the *Seder*, and he sees it more befitting to just think about the *Pesach* story and that would be enough. This is why the *rasha* calls it an *avoda*, a tiresome chore.

In response to the *rasha* we tell him to 'blunt his teeth', meaning he should imagine a scenario where he didn't have teeth and was unable to eat. In such a scenario, he would merely be able to 'think about' what it would be like to be able to eat. Obviously, this would do nothing and he would die of starvation, because eating requires activity in order to stay alive, not simply thinking about eating.

Chacham Ovadia explains, we prove to the *rasha* that just as humans require a tangible activity of eating as opposed to dreaming about food in order to survive physically, so too real action is needed to survive spiritually. It is not enough to think about *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, we need to perform all the actions that Hashem commanded us to perform in commemoration of this great miracle.

This great lesson is one not only for the *rasha* who is reluctant to do the *mitzvos* which we all look forward to year round, but also for us. It is imperative that we realize the significance of the *mitzvos* and their bringing us, through physically performing them with passion and love for the *dvar Hashem*, to closeness with Hashem and a full appreciation for all of His *nissim*.

*YACHOL MEROSH CHODESH***The Right Time for Stories***Netanel Schechter (25)*

Everyone knows *Yachol Merosh Chodesh* talks about an argument that goes back and forth of what you might think it means versus what the *pasuk* actually means. First you might think that the *Haggadah* is supposed to be read and said starting from *Rosh Chodesh Nissan*, however the next *pasuk* says that it needs to be on that day; meaning the first day of *Pesach*. The obvious question asked on this is that is this *pasuk* not saying you should remember *Yetzias Mitzrayim* by daytime when clearly the *Seder* is at night. The following *pasuk* specifies that “it is because of this,” which shows that you can only say it when the *matzah* and *maror* are in front of you meaning at night.

We might also come to believe that we would be required to recite *Yetzias Mitzrayim* during the day because it was during the day that the *Korban Pesach* was brought. Therefore, we are told that the proper time to commemorate the story is while reclined in our seats at the *Seder* with *matzah* and *maror*.

The *Shla Hakadosh* answers why we would not tell over the story during the time that the *Korban Pesach* was brought: daytime. We need to make sure that there is enough time and respect for the children to be able to ask questions with the rightful answers that are deserved. It would be rude to leave a question unanswered or even to give a brief answer. While the time the *Korban Pesach* was being brought, there were a lot of people involved with a lot of work, and no silence that would be needed to thoughtfully answer a respected question. At the *Seder*, everything is set in its proper place to add the right feel to the meal and make everyone feel comfortable to ask questions and receive the answers they deserve.

Why are the *matzah* and *maror* appropriate to have in front of you before being able to fulfill *Yetzias Mitzrayim*? Some say that it is important to have physical symbols in front of them to help them learn, understand and appreciate the *Mitzvos* better. Rav Chayim Brisker stated that even if a prophet believes someone who promises to help and save him, he is not yet required to give thanks to Hashem until it actually happens. He bases it off a *pasuk* which claims that

praise is only deserved once someone physically touchable is there. Therefore, we recite the story in front of our *matzah* and *maror* which portrays the freedom and slavery of the story. These two foods are used to help make an impact on the children and teach them to understand the importance of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*.

MESICHILA**Finally Free**

Nasson Birich (23) & Dov Hochman (23) & Aaron Sisser (23)

When we first think of the *Seder*, we normally associate it with our exodus from slavery in Egypt. However, there is more to it than just that. In addition to our physical freedom, we also focus on the spiritual aspect. In the part of the *Pesach Seder* called *Maggid*, we mention many different things about our ancestors. One interesting thing goes back to the time of Avraham Avinu, where we say “*Mitchila Ovdei Avodah Zara*” and discuss how his family used to be idolaters until he saw something greater to be served, the one and only *Hashem*. We need to think about the fact that because of *Yitzias Mitzraim* we are now both physically and spiritually free.

Rabbi Taubes Shlitah gave a *Dvar Torah* while I was in Poland about the *Bracha* that we say at the *Seder* during *Maggid* called *Baruch Hamakom*. He said that if we take a step back and think about it, we have many names that we call *Hashem*. We have *Hashem*, *Elokeinu*, *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*, *Ribono Shel Olam*, yet very rarely do we call *Hashem* “*Hamakom*”, which colloquially means omnipresent, as is heard in the famous Uncle Moishy song that goes “*Hashem* is here, *Hashem* is there, *Hashem* is truly everywhere. Up, up, down, down, right, left, and all around, here, there, and everywhere that’s where He can be found.” However, that is what we seem to be doing right now during the *Seder* which is quite strange. Why do we pick this point in particular to change the way we refer to *Hashem*?

Rabbi Taubes quoted one of his Rebbeim, Rav Soloveitchik, and said that he brings down an interesting answer to this question. While “*Hamakom*” is seldom used when referring to *Hashem*, this is not the only time we use it. Other times we use *Hamakom* are when comforting mourners, during the famous *Tefillah* and song *Acheinu* which I was proud to sing in Poland along with my friends who were there with me and some public schoolers from Long Island, and right as we start our *Davening* on *Yom Kippur* night. The Rav explained that there is a connection between these four times we use *Hamakom* to refer to *Hashem*.

He explains that when we are trying to comfort mourners we are in effect trying to show them that they are not alone. Despite the fact that they may seem to be alone in the world, we are showing

them by saying the word *Hamakom* that *Hashem* is still in every place; He is still there with them. Similarly, when we say *Acheinu*, if we pay attention to the words we see that this *Tefillah* refers to people in terrible circumstances, such as suffering or captivity. These Jewish people also may feel disconnected from *Hashem*, but we remind them that *Hashem* is still with them by referring to Him as *Hamakom*. On *Yom Kippur* night, we may get overwhelmed by recounting all of our sins. So, we refer to *Hashem* as *Hamakom* to remind ourselves that He is there with us, throughout the good and the bad, and that we are not a lost cause.

So too, at this point in the *Seder*, we may feel disconnected because we are supposed to feel like we are actually in *Mitzrayim* to the point that we are craving the exodus, feeling like we are at the lowest of lows like the *B'nai Yisroel* on their 49th level of *tumah*. We feel like we are as far from *Hashem* as we can possibly be. So, we use the word *Hamakom* to show that *Hashem* is even with us here in our time of *galus*. This is why we use the word *Hamakom* at this point in the *Seder*.

My good friend Dov Hochman pointed out that not only were the *B'nai Yisroel* on the 49th level of *tumah*, but we also mention during the *Seder* that we were “*Mitchila Ovdei Avodah Zara*”. They felt like they were so far from *Hashem* at times to the point where they were even serving strange, alien gods. This is when they actually had to look for *Hamakom* which is what Avraham Avinu did, even though it surrounded them and they might or might not have realized it. This is why, during the *Seder*, right after we mention how our ancestors worshiped idols, we call *Hashem Hamakom*. We are demonstrating that even at that low time in our history, *Hashem* was always there. *Hashem* is omnipresent. *Hashem* is *Hamakom*.

We need to take time out of our lives and specifically out of the *Seder* to look for *Hashem* and *Hamakom* and really feel connected to Him. Unlike some of our ancestors, we have the opportunity to freely communicate with *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*. We need to recognize that *Hamakom* is around us to bring *Mashiach* and be true to the words that we sing every year at the end of the *Seder* and *Yom Kippur* davening - “*Lishana Haba’ah B’Yerushalayim Habinuya*”, and feel that we are finally free.

BARUCH SHOMEIR HAVTACHASO

How Avraham Got Us out of Mitzrayim

Sinyamin Rubin (22)

We all know that actions usually speak louder than words, and our redemption from *Mitzrayim* is no different. Throughout *Tanach*, our biggest role models of people who not only were *tzadikim* but active players were Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov. The *Tur* (*Se'if* 217) compares each of the *shalosh regalim* to one of the *avos*. Yaakov is compared to *Sukkos*, since the *passuk* says “*veYaakov nasa su-kosah*”, Yitzchak is compared to *Shavuos*, since a *shofar* was blown at *Matan Torah* which comes from the animal that replaced Yitzchak. As for Avraham, he is compared to *Pesach* since the *passuk* says “*lushi va’asi ugos*” which refers to the three *matzos*. This connection between Avraham and the *chag* of *Pesach* is incredibly rich. Of course the *Bris Bein Habesarim* is just glaring at this topic. It is the *bris* in which Hashem Hashem tells Avraham of the destiny of his children, of their future slavery that will end in redemption and inheritance of *Eretz Yisrael*. But beyond that, what more is there to delve into in this relationship and of Avraham and *Pesach* and what can we take from it?

Chazal tell us that the reason why we were redeemed from *Mitzrayim* was from the *Zechus* of *Middas Hachesed*. The Chofetz Chaim writes that from “*nachisa vechasdecha am zu ga’alta neihalta ve’azcha el neveih kadshecha*” (*Shemos* 15:13) we learn out that “*chasdecha*” is *Gemeilus Chasadim*. Therefore we see that the *chesed* of *Bnei Yisrael kiveyachol* woke Hashem to do His own *chesed* of Redemption. How is this so? When *Bnei Yisrael* were suffering incredibly and the slavery was getting more intense, they didn’t turn against each other and made a pact to protect one another, and through their kindness to each other Hashem would redeem them. It was through their *chesed* and keeping the *Bris* of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov, in their hearts, that they roused Hashem to do the same.

But what *chesed* were *Bnei Yisrael* able to perform? In order to perform *chesed*, one needs to either sacrifice their body or their wealth for another in some way in order for that action to be considered *chesed*. Since they were slaves in *Mitzrayim*, they didn’t own any wealth and since they worked day and night how could they have

the time?

The answer is that while they may not have been able to help in such a physical sense, they were able to help with kindness and encouragement. When one friend was feeling down they were able to help alleviate the friend's pain with just a few words of encouragement, and that type of *chesed* is even more powerful than any other! As it says in Bava Basra (7b) that if one helps their friend with money they will be given 6 *brachos*, but if they give words of encouragement, he receives eleven *brachos*!

Therefore we see how Avraham truly has influence on *Yetzias Mitzrayim*. From Avraham we have learned that one must serve Hashem with love. That instilled in us, in *Bnei Yisrael*, to do the work of *chesed shel* Avraham. Avraham always accepted people to stay with him and served Hashem with humility. It was this *chesed shel* Avraham that influenced our *chesed* which we performed in *Mitzrayim*. We should be *zocheh* to perform *chesed shel* Avraham to help us in our path out of our current *galus* and see the *Beis Hamikdash* in our time.

*TZEI ULEMAD***The Power of Speech and *Mesorah****Yaakov Weinstock ('22)*

There are many classic *divrei Torah* to say on the *Haggadah*, but most *divrei Torah* focus on the beginning of the *Haggadah* the introductory paragraphs that introduce the main part of *maggid* which starts by *tzei ulemad*. *Tzei ulemad* is made up of what a Jew says when he brings his *bikkurim* to the *Beis Hamikdash*. Part of the ceremony when bringing *bikkurim* is that one must read the *pesukim*. These *pesukim* as a whole takes one through Jewish history or the key moments in Jewish history starting with Lavan and ending up in *Eretz Yisrael*. Really, recounting the full realization of the *Bris Bein Habesarim* that was promised to the *Avos*. However, there is still a question. Why do we decide to go through the *pesukim* by *mikra bikkurim*?

The *Sefer Hachinuch* explains that the entire point of the *mitzvah* of *mikra bikkurim* is to invoke in a person a sense of gratitude through the *koach hadibbur* going step by step and enumerating the countless acts of kindness Hashem has done for us throughout history. In the case of *bikkurim*, going through the history and contemplating on where the Jews have been and how far we have come and speaking that out in a very concise way and straight to the point should invoke in us a great sense of gratitude to Hashem. As this is one of the themes of the night, to praise and thank Hashem for saving us.

This doesn't completely answer the question. I understand the relevance of these *pesukim* to the *Pesach* night in that it has shared themes. However, why was this the optimal choice to fulfill the *mitzvah Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim*? Still, couldn't the same goal of gratitude and the realization of all that Hashem has done for us be accomplished with the telling of the *Pesach* story from the *pesukim* in *Sefer Shemos*?

There must be something else going on here. Perhaps we can answer this question by defining what fundamentally this night is all about. There is an obligation that each person has to view himself and present himself as if right now he left Egypt. The Rambam writes this in *Hilchos Chametz U'Matzah* (7:6). This is an incredibly

difficult obligation to fulfill. How can I, who's living thousands of years after *Yetzias Mitzrayim* possibly feel as if I just left Egypt? The Rambam goes on to explain that this *chiyuv* is what underlines the *mitzvah* of *arba kosos* that there is a *din* of *kos shel brachah*, but there is a separate *din* by *arba kosos* of *derech cheirus*. What motivates the separate *halachah* of *cheirus* is this *chiyuv* of *chayev Adam lir'os es atzmo keilu hu yatza mimitzrayim*. The Rambam believes that the *chiyuv* is done through action and visible props and objects as we'll see later in the *Haggadah*, but there is another method to fulfill this *chiyuv* and this is what the *Sefer Hachinuch* brought up. It's that how we speak about something impacts how we think and relate to it. Negative speech can cause us to relate to certain things negatively. Positive speech can cause us to relate to things positively. How we speak affects how we think. When one looks at the language of *mikra bikkurim*, it is all in the first person: Lavan wanted to destroy *my* father and the mitzrayim made *us* look bad and they afflicted *us*. However, while this is the first person talking about the redemption from *Mitzrayim* this is also someone who is separate even hundreds of years from the actual event and yet still first person is used. The person speaks as if he experienced *Yetzias Mitzrayim*. Just like the *koach hadibbur* is used to create a sense of gratitude within us, we are harnessing the *koach hadibbur* to create that feeling that we too were there and were saved in Egypt fulfilling the most difficult obligation of the night.

There are many lessons that can be learned from this, but I would like to point out two.

1. The incredible power of speech and action to influence thought.
2. The *Seder Night* and our main *chiyuvim* teach us how a Jew should view himself in the view of human history. The unique characteristic of a Jew is that he is one with the past. He should feel that he is a culmination of not just what he consciously experiences, but a culmination of experiences and events of all of Jewish history. Part of our goal as Jews is to relate to our past in a unique way in that we feel a part of the past even though we live in the present. That is done through the idea of *mesorah*. Rabbi Yosef Dov Soloveitchik

was famous for saying that the *Seder* Night is a night that's major theme is *mesorah*. A *mesorah* is usually visualized as a chain connecting the past to the future giving over values and lessons that will shape the world outlook of the next generation. However, it also connects the present to the past allowing the next generation to feel that they are part of something bigger than themselves and they are part of a unique history that they have in some way experienced themselves. This is the goal of the *Seder* Night to allow the next generation to feel a part of the past and something bigger than ourselves. We are a part of that which has culminated over millennia.

THE MAKKOS

Middah Keneged Middah: From Baby in the Basket to Swimming in the Sea*Bnei Yisrael-David Rosenberg (23)*

The *Measure For Measure Haggadah* is a lovely sefer published by Mossad Harav Kook. In it, Rabbi Aharon Yehoshua Pessin highlights the many ways in which actions in the story of our slavery and redemption from *Mitzrayim* are perfectly matched to appropriate consequences. This premise can be sourced to the *mishnah* in *Maseches Sotah* (1:7) which states “*bimiddah she’adam moded, bah modidin lo*,” “with the measure that a person measures, with that he is measured”. It is describing how Hashem acts toward people. He treats them, in punishment or reward, the way that they have behaved. *Middah keneged middah*, measure for measure, is one way that we can very clearly see Hashem as He rules over the world. And naturally, this trait of Hashem’s, the trait of correspondence, is prevalent in the story of *Yetzias Mitzrayim* from its beginning to its end. Let’s look at a few examples.

Before Hashem sends the *makkos* upon *Mitzrayim*, He explains in a general statement that the *makkos* would serve to have *Mitzrayim* recognize Him (*Shemos* 7:4). Similar statements are also found before several of the *makkos* individually. Regarding many of the *makkos*, Hashem tells Moshe to go to Pharaoh and to instruct him to release *Bnei Yisrael*, or suffer the plague. It is in this warning for *makkas arov* that Moshe is instructed to tell Pharaoh that “*ki im eincha meshalei’ach* ((יִשְׁלַחְנִי מִן־הָאָרֶץ) *ami hineni mashlich* ((אֲנִי מֵשַׁלְחִיךָ מִן־הָאָרֶץ) *becha...es he’arov*”. The message to Pharaoh is that if he doesn’t send ((יִשְׁלַחְנִי מִן־הָאָרֶץ) the people out, Hashem will *likewise* send ((אֲנִי מֵשַׁלְחִיךָ מִן־הָאָרֶץ) wild animals upon him. We thus see that Hashem’s punishments to Pharaoh were exactly fitting for his crimes. (*The Measure for Measure Haggadah* pg. 124-125)

When Pharaoh was afraid of the growth of *Bnei Yisrael*, he ordered that the baby boys be thrown into the Nile River (*Shemos* 1:10-16). Though this was his public reason, Rashi (*Shemos* 1:16, 22) explains that Pharaoh was told by his astrologers that the savior of the Jewish people would soon be born, and water would be his downfall, so Pharaoh wanted every baby boy born in *Mitzrayim* to be thrown into the water to prevent this. For the act of murder done by drowning, the *Mitzrim* drowned in the sea at Yam Suf. (*The Measure for Measure*

Haggadah pg. 357)

One understanding of the first *passuk* of *Shiras Hayam*, “*ashirah laHashem ki ga’oh ga’ah sus verochevo ramah vayam*”, “I will sing to Hashem for He is the most elevated, horse and rider He cast into the sea”, is that because the *Mitzrim* arrogantly elevated themselves over *Bnei Yisrael*, Hashem raised them even higher in their minds, in order to make the fall that much greater. Thus, the *passuk* reads “I will sing to Hashem for He has made the arrogant (*ga’oh*) haughtier (*ga’ah*); horse and its elevated - physically and mentally high-and-mighty - rider are tumbling down into the sea” (*Kli Yakar* on *Shemos* 15:1). For elevating themselves, the *Mitzrim* were punished with a great plunge into the deep.

And finally, if it is not too bold to suggest, during *Makkas Arbeh*, the *passuk* describes what the locusts will do and says “*ve’achal es yeser hapleitah hanisheret lachem min habarad*”; when the locusts come, they will eat all that remains after *Makkas Barad*. The Ramban (*Shemos* 10:4) analyzes the *pesukim* and argues that very little time must have passed between the *barad* and the *arbeh*. The events of these two *makkos* as they unfold appear as follows: There is massive destruction of all *Mitzrayim*’s land and property as paradoxical burning hail rains down upon *Mitzrayim* (*Shemos* 9:24-25). When this stops, there is a short period of time with no *makkah*, just the rubble left after *barad*. This lasts only until the trees start to bloom and wheat and spelt crops start to bud. Perhaps there is hope for *Mitzrayim*; maybe they can rebuild? But this glimmer of hope is extinguished as a dark cloud comes from the east, casting a shadow over *Mitzrayim*. The locusts descend and devour every last bud - every last hope - for the restoration of *Mitzrayim* (*Shemos* 10:13, 15).

Why then was *Mitzrayim* deserving of such a terrible, crushing punishment? Looking earlier in the story, to a crime mentioned above, one might be able to glimpse an answer. The *Mitzrim* took the sons, the children, of *Bnei Yisroel*, and drowned them in the river. What is a child? A child is the future. They are the possibility of continuity. They are potential. *A child is hope*. So, perhaps, for murdering the children of *Bnei Yisroel*, for casting them into a darkness deep enough that a mother would set her son adrift in a basket on a river, *Mitzrayim* was punished, *middah keneged middah*, with the destruction, before their eyes, of their own hope and their own future.

KRIAS YAM SUF
Seeing Hashem Through It All

Raffi Weil (22)

In *Parshas Bo*, Moshe asks the Jews to ask the Egyptians for their silver and gold. As the *passuk* states:

דְּבַר־נָא בְּאָזְנֵי הָעַם וַיִּשְׁאַלְוּ אִישׁ מֵאֶת רֵעֵהוּ וְאִשָּׁה מֵאֶת רֵעוּתָהּ כֶּלִי־כֶסֶף וְכֶלִי־זָהָב

The question that bothers the *meforshim* is why did Moshe need to ask the Jews in a polite manner? If he wants it to be done, just tell them to?

Rashi comments that Moshe had to ask them in a requesting manner, as he says "*na*", *please*. Moshe acted in this way so that Avraham wouldn't claim that Hashem kept the promise to enslave the Jews but didn't keep the promise to take them out with great wealth. This Rashi seems challenging. Albeit a statement of *Chazal*, for what reason would Avraham make such a claim? Did he really not trust Hashem?

The Sforno suggests a different answer. The Jews didn't want to go get the gold and silver from the Egyptians. They simply wanted to leave *Mitzrayim*. They didn't want to provoke them or make themselves into the "bad guys" more than they had already been. The Jews thought, if we take their wealth, even if we are let out, the Egyptians will just chase us. Therefore, Moshe asked them to please go, *dabeir na*, to the Egyptians and ask for their wealth. Apparently, this acquisition of wealth will not be counterproductive to the freedom and may actually be the means through which the Jews were saved from the *Mitzrim*, banishing living in fear of them. The question of course is, how? What does taking their wealth have to do with living a life of freedom? Having money, although it is a sign of freedom, doesn't mean everything.

To answer this question we must see the Ramban's question in *Beshalach*. Asks the Ramban: Why didn't the *Mitzrim* understand that they were going to die at *Yam Suf*? Clearly the sea didn't split for them? All the miracles only happened on behalf of the Jews. Would it make sense that now that there would be miracles on behalf of the Egyptians? What was their thought process? The Ramban answers that this was the biggest miracle of all. The *Mitzrim*

entering after the Jews was senseless and could be explained by no means other than a miracle.

Rabbi Meisels suggested that when we read the Sforino it all makes sense. The Jews would have been fine and wouldn't have been chased into the sea, had they not taken the *Mitzrim's* money. But now that the Jews had their money, the Egyptians would go at all costs to get it back. The moment that the *Yam Suf* swallowed them, the Jews finally felt free from *Mitzrayim*. When originally asking, the Jews were hesitant. Now, it became clear that the gold and silver that they took would lead to their oppressor's downfall. This was Hashem's plan even if we couldn't see it.

The truth is that throughout the story of *Mitzrayim*, Moshe and Aharon did things which seem to be absurd on the surface level, but ended up being beneficial. They go to Pharaoh and ask him to release the Jews. Pharaoh responds by making the burden more difficult. The Jews responded with anger against Moshe. Moshe turned to Hashem in plea for the situation he was in. Hashem responds: don't worry Moshe, I have a plan. And sure enough, Hashem made a *cheshbon* to intensify the slavery temporarily in order to contract the 400 years of slavery into a mere 210 years.

By the *Yam Suf*, the Jews seemed to be surrounded by all sides. They called out to Moshe "was *Mitzrayim* not bad enough". Hashem responds: don't worry I have a plan to split the sea but you need to have *Emunah*.

The Rambam famously writes that on *Pesach* we must show, "*leharos*", ourselves that we are free. While this is true at the *Seder* night, it applies to a greater degree as well.

We look at things which seem to have no positive value. But perhaps that is just our lack of *Emunah* speaking. We often come home feeling like it was a bad day. This could be because we didn't accomplish enough, we got in a fight with a friend, our plans fell through, or any number of frustrations. For all we know this was all the plan of Hashem to make sure something worse didn't happen. We need to have this type of *Emunah* oriented mindset. This *Pesach* we must recognize that our freedom comes through an awareness that Hashem is the ultimate Creator of the universe and He is keeping His eye out for us.

DAYEINU

No Really, Can we *Dayeinu* the Song *Dayeinu*?*Arveh Laub (23)*

On *Leil Pesach* during the *seder* we sing *Dayeinu*, a song loved by all with a catchy tune, and a great chorus. *Dayeinu* talks about many great things and miracles that *Hashem* did for the *Bnei Yisrael* from when he took them out of *mitzrayim* until he gave us the great land of *Eretz Yisrael*. However, this song raises some very insightful questions. Why now, during the middle of *maggid*, right after counting the *makkos Hasehem* did for us, do we itemize all of the favors that *Hashem* has done for us?

An answer to this question given by the *Shibolei HaLeket* is that the previous paragraph in the *Haggadah*, mentioned many miracles done for the *Bnei Yisrael* while still in *Mitzrayim*. *Dayeinu* talks about the miracles done for them after that and continues that discussion about miracles done for *Klal Yisrael*. Another question which is raised by the *Toras Menachem* is that while many of the things that *Hashem* did for *Klal Yisrael* that are mentioned here have direct correlation to *yetzias mitzrayim*, some of them do not. Why do we mention these things? They seem to be out of place on a night where we are commanded to talk about *Yetzias Mitzrayim*. What do these things have to do with *Yetzias Mitzrayim*?

One could simply say that it is true they are not really in the overwhelming theme of the *seder*, and that these things do not have specific relevance to *Yetzias Mitzrayim*. The reason why they are mentioned is because (similar to the first answer) it was appropriate to continue the discussion and have these miracles mentioned also. Some might say this answer is very "*Baal HaBatish*", (that this answer does not answer the question). Why is there a song that is so long about something other than the theme?

The Rebbe gives an astounding answer to this question. It seems that as long as the *Bnei Yisrael* had not reached their destination of *Eretz Yisrael* they always felt like the *Mitzriyim* could recapture them. This thinking caused them not to feel like free people, but instead as runaway slaves. And that is why the *hagadah* mentioned all the miracles that happened to *Klal Yisrael* until they got to *Eretz Yisrael*. *Yitzias Mitzrayim* was not over until they got there.

So even if at first glance it seems that the *Bnei Yisrael* were finished with *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, and that these events mentioned in *Dayeinu* have no place in a night in where the *ikur mitzvah* is to talk about *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, really these events were part of the *yetziyah* and we really have a *mitzvah* to commemorate them as well.

*PESACH, MATZAH, AND MARROR***Developing Our Inside to Match Our Outside***Rabbi Shimon Schenker, Menahel*

Rabban Gamliel used to say, "whoever does not say the following three items on Pesach, has not fulfilled his obligation, these are them: pesach, matzah and marror.

The *Rishonim* disagree about what a person doesn't fulfill by omitting these items at the *Seder*. *Tosafos* in *Pesachim* 115 (D"H *Vamartem*) says that a person needs to specifically say these three things in order to fulfill those specific *mitzvos*. Since in general we have a *hekesheh* (biblical comparison) between (*Korban*) *pesach*, *matzah* and *marror*, therefore we need to mention all of them. How do we know there is a *mitzvah d'oraisa* to speak about these *mitzvos*? The *Aruch L'Ner* in *Sukkah* 28a (D"H *Lo*) writes that the *passuk* says "*Vamartem Zevach Pesach*", and you shall say about the *Korban Pesach*. The *Aruch L'Ner* says that this is the general opinion of *Tosafos* around *Shas* (see *Tosafos*, *Sukkah* 3a) that if one does not fulfill a *mitzvah* according to the way the *Rabannan* said to do it, one has not fulfilled his *mitzvah* even on a *Torah* level.

However the *Ramban* (*Milchamos Hashem*, *Berachos* 2b in the *Rif* and *Ran* in *Pesachim* 115) writes that while we obviously need to fulfill *mitzvos* according to the way the *Rabannan* set it up, if one does not do it in that way, he has still fulfilled his obligation on a *Torah* level, just not according to the *Rabannan*.

Unlike *Tosafos*, the *Rashbam* in his commentary to the *Haggadah* as well as what is implied from the *Rambam* (*Hil' Chametz UMatzah* 7:1-5, see *Kiryas Sefer* there) explain that according to *Rabban Gamliel*, whoever does not speak about *pesach*, *matzah* and *marror* has not fulfilled his obligation of *Maggid*. The *Kiryas Sefer* there on the *Rambam* writes that by speaking about these things, a person fulfills his obligation as well of showing that he came out of *Mitzrayim* (the *Rambam* writes the language of "*leharos es atzmo*", being obligated to show that he came out of *Mitzrayim*, not just to see himself).

According to *Tosafos*, it is understandable that by not speak-

ing about these three items, a person has not fulfilled his obligation of those items (whether *d'oraisa* or *d'rabbanan*). However, according to the Rashbam and the Rambam, why has a person not fulfilled his obligation of *Maggid*? *Mori V'Rebbi*, Rav Yonasan Sacks *shlit"a* points out in his commentary to the *Haggadah* that the *Kehillas Yaakov* writes that the entire *mitzvah* of *Maggid* can not be fulfilled just any-time one would like, it can only be fulfilled when the *Korban Pesach*, *matzah* and *marror* are lying in front of you. They are an integral part of the story and the message that we are trying to pass on to our children at the *Seder*.

This strong connection to the telling of the story of leaving *Mitzrayim* can be seen from the position of Raban Gamliel's statement in the *Haggadah*. Why is it here? It should be in the beginning of *Maggid* before we begin the story? Rabbi Aharon Marcus writes in his commentary to the *Haggadah* that Raban Gamliel is teaching us that at the *Seder*, "what goes into one's mouth and what comes out are intimately connected". We need to emotionally connect to both the objects at the *Seder* that we consume and the words that come out of our mouth. Rabbi Marcus points out that this, perhaps, is a core principle of Raban Gamliel in that when he was the *Rosh Yeshivah*, the *Gemara* in *Berachos* tells us that he only accepted a student "whose inside is like his outside". It was Raban Gamliel's responsibility to rebuild the *yeshivos* after the destruction of the second *Beis Hamikdash* and the way he did that was by only having students who were consistent in and out. Raban Gamliel is trying to hold us to a high standard, here right before we consume *matzah*, *marror* and what will soon be the *Korban Pesach*. When we consume them, we need to contemplate the story of leaving *Mitzrayim* and make sure that we do not miss the point of eating them and learn their lessons, so our insides will be like our outsides.

Rabban Gamliel's Special List: Why Are These Three Things Different?

Ben Goldfeder (26)

In the *Haggadah* we say in the name of Rabban Gamliel: Anybody who doesn't say these three things on *Pesach* is not *yotzei* his *chiyuv* (fulfill their obligation): *pesach*, *matzah*, and *marror*. *Pesach* because of..." But asks the Noda Beyehuda: What is the difference between these three *mitzvos* and the rest of the Torah that we have to say their reasons? And furthermore, why does it have to say "*lo yatza yedei chovaso*", it should have been enough with "*lo yatza*"?

The Noda Beyehuda answers through an explanation of how long we were in *Mitzrayim*. The Torah says we would be in *Mitzrayim* for 400 years. But the *Chachmim* tell us through calculation that we were only in *Mitzrayim* for 210 years. The *midrashim* argue exactly why it was 210 years. The more famous answer given in the *midrashim* is that the harshness that we had in those 210 years was equivalent to 400 years. But there is another *midrash* that says that because the *galus* (exile) of *Mitzrayim* was shortened, we needed to make it up later, which is happening in this *galus* (Edom).

You can derive a proof of the former - that really the "400 years" were fulfilled through the harshness - from the order of the items in Rabban Gamaliel's statement. Rabban Gamliel says *pesach*, then *matzah*, and then *marror*. *Matzah* is a hint to *geulah* and *marror* hints to *shibud* (servitude) so it should have said *marror* before *matzah* because servitude should come before the *geulah* (redemption)! But in truth, says the Noda Beyehudah, *marror* is the true *geulah*. The *marror* is not just the *shibud* itself, but the mechanism through which we were redeemed! It was through the fact that their lives were made so bitter by the *Mitzrim*, through the extra hard work, that they came out of *Mitzrayim* on time. And you could have made a mistake, thinking they came out early and would still have years of servitude in wait for them, but if that were true then *marror* would only be a symbol of slavery and would have no connection to the redemption and should have been stated first! Rather it must be that *marror* is the true *geulah* and because of the bitterness the calculation of slavery was considered completed. And this is what Rabban Gamliel says: anybody who didn't say these three

things is not *yotzei* his *chov* because if he didn't say the reasons it would be a *chisaron* (lacking) in the *yesod* (fundamental principle) of *Yetzias Mitzrayim* and he won't be *yotzei* his *chov* of *Sippur Yetzi-as Mitzrayim*.

Another answer the Noda Beyehuda brings in name of the Kitzur Ba'al Shulchan Aruch is that even if you ate *pesach*, *matzah*, and *marror*, if you did not say the reasons you would not be *yotzei* because then how can you come to see yourself as if *you* came out of *Mitzrayim* and we came out of slavery!? The reasons for these three centerpieces of the *Seder* must be present in our minds to be able to connect these specific items to our story and journey out of slavery in *Mitzrayim*.

It's Personal

Dori Seiffer ('19)

Rabban Gamliel says, whoever doesn't say *pesach*, *matzah*, and *marror* has not fulfilled his obligation. There are several questions here:

- 1) What is the obligation that he is referring to?
- 2) What is the fundamental significance of the *pesach*, *matzah*, and *marror* toward this obligation that if one doesn't say them he doesn't fulfill it?
- 3) What does it mean to say *pesach*, *matzah*, and *marror*? The wording isn't, "one must analyze" or "one must discuss." It implies something more fundamental: One must say the essence of these things: What they are.
- 4) Following up to that, how do the following paragraphs which describe the three fit in?

The first point to address is what is the significance of the three things, and from there we can see how it fits into the descriptive paragraphs, and then branch out to develop a better understanding of the *seder*. It seems to me that there are two aspects to *pesach*, *matzah*, and *marror*, as seen in the descriptive paragraphs.

The first aspect is the perspective of the onlooker:

- The *pesach* represents the way Hashem saved the Jews, by smiting the Egyptians while sparing us.
- The *matzah* represents the 'power' of Hashem's salvation, the way that instantly the Jews were transformed from slaves to free people.
- The *marror* represents that which Hashem saved the Jews from the bitter enslavement of the Egyptians

And the second aspect is the perspective of the one experiencing it: The *pesach* represents the present, the actual experience of being saved.

- The *matzah* represents the future, the resources you have and the feeling of leaving into the unknown, following Hashem, without worrying about what you have to eat.
- And the *marror* represents the past, that which you are leaving from.

And both of these ideas are found in the language of the paragraphs, which elaborate on the nature of the three things. *Pesach* starts as a description of why people brought it: because of the salvation. And then it progresses to a personal description of the experience “It is a *Pesach* offering for Hashem, who passed over the houses of the Jews in Egypt, when he struck the Egyptians and spared our houses; and the people bowed down and prostrated themselves.” It first describes the salvation through an onlooker’s perspective, and then describes it as though one is experiencing it.

And by *matzah*, again, it first describes the onlooker’s perspective. The suddenness and the redemption, before transferring to the perspective of the one leaving, hinting at the hope and nervousness heading to a better future.

And the same by *marror*, first describing the bitterness followed by a description of one experiencing it.

What is the point of this? It seems to me that the two ideas are two aspects of *Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim*, both the perspective of the onlooker and the perspective of the one experiencing it.

And with all this explained, the question becomes, why now? What is this doing here, and what is the point of the strange introduction of Rabban Gamliel. And it seems to me that the purpose is because this very point is the crossroads of the *seder*: It is where the *seder* turns from primarily describing the experience to attempting to live through it. The paragraphs of Rabban Gamliel, leading into *Bechol Dor Vador* and *Lefichach*, describe the shift in tone of the *seder*. Until now, we were mostly describing it. Now, we must live it.

And the paragraphs here serve a vital purpose: They are the instructions on how one’s perspective must shift. No longer can we view the “*pesach*” as being a memorial to Hashem having saved the Jews. It is a reminder of our experience, of being in Egypt and seeing the *makkos*, and how they affected the Egyptians and not us, and our gratitude towards Hashem. No longer can we view the “*matzah*” as a symbol of Hashem bringing the redemption so fast that there was no time to allow the bread to rise because instead it

reminds us of when we were in Egypt, of the experience of the *makos*, and how, all of a sudden, you are being whisked out, just having enough time to grab your bread in whatever state it is, and you trust in Hashem to, once again, save you as you begin your journey into the unknown. And the *marror* is no longer a symbol of the bitterness of labor that Hashem saved us from, but a reminder of when you were working in Egypt surrounded by angry taskmasters and your brothers aching in pain, desperately begging to Hashem in every spare moment to save you from this horrible pain.

Without this perspective shift, without understanding the switch in the dual meanings of *pesach*, *matzah*, and *marror*, you can never fulfill your obligation, for how can you truly thank Hashem for something that you yourself do not understand. But once your perspective has been changed, the mental shift from the perspective of “Them” to the perspective of “I”, you can truly regard yourself as though you had left *Mitzrayim*, and then, and only then, you can begin your joyous recitation of the *Hallel Hagadol*, thanking Hashem for the great redemption you personally experienced.

*RACHTZAH***Going Where Few *Divrei Torah* Have Gone Before***Noam Schechter ('22)*

The *Haggadah* is the most commonly printed and published work in Jewish tradition (more common even than the *Chumash*). This may be due to the uniqueness of the *seder*, and the fact that there is a direct obligation to teach one's children, as the *seder* is full of *mesorah* and *minhagim*; every family has unique customs and ideas which are prevalent on *Leil Pesach* which they can all write up.

However, there is one thing which almost all families experience: school *divrei Torah*. Universally all families are doomed to go through the same series of events due to the wonderful, yet aggravating, elementary school *Haggados*. Even before the *seder* actually begins each kid already has four *divrei Torah* to share, since, maybe solely as a torture device, each *Morah* gave four *divrei Torah* on the *seder* of the *seder* song. But the all-too-well-known torture doesn't end there. Scattered throughout the *seder* are wails of "it's not fair! Yedidya stole my *dvar Torah*!! I was gonna say that too!!" or "Wait Daddy you're going too fast! How am I gonna say all ten things my *Morah* said to say on the first word of *Ha Lachma Anya*?!?" or "We have to go back to the beginning of *maggid* since I forgot what my *Morah* said to say by *Avadim Hayinu*!!!!" And then, at long last, after hearing each and every kid explain why we are doing *karpas*, how the words *vehi sheamda* are actually an acronym, and how *dayenu* is like a *mashal* of a perfume shop, three times each for every kid, serenity and relaxation arrive with the calming arrival of *rachtzah*. All at once the constant cacophony of each kid trying to say their *dvar Torah* louder than the guy next to them ceases, and, knowing that the *Morahs* didn't have time/knew the kids would be asleep for the latter part of the *seder*, quiet ensues.

I was challenged by Meir Morell to ruin the *seder* serenity by writing a *dvar Torah* for *rachtzah*, one of the least written on parts of the *seder*. After perusing through a bunch of *Haggados* I discovered that while some just use *rachtzah* as a segue to go through *Hilchos Netilas Yadayim*, there is a surprising amount of literature on this seemingly mundane action.

Rav Kook explains that the reason why the earlier washing was called *urchatz* and now it is called *rachtzah* is due to a subtle linguistic difference. *Urchatz* (meaning *wash!*) is a more unusual occurrence, therefore it is said as an imperative. However, *rachtzah* (meaning *washing*) is an absolute *halachic* requirement so it is said in a more permanent state.

Interestingly, the *Haggados* of Ramban and the *Kli Yakar* say to recite: “שאו ידיכם קודש וברכו את ה' . ואשא כפי אל מצותיך אשר אהבתי, ועשך” *בחוֹקִיךָ* before washing only for *maztah*, which is intriguing since it is a *Sephardic minhag* to say this before any *netilas yadayim*, so then why would they say to say this only by *rachtzah* of the *seder* (especially the *Kli Yakar* who was born and learned in Poland and who was the Rav in Prague)??

For now I'm going to leave this question as a [צ"ע]

The *Simchas Yaavetz* (Rabbi Dovid Cohen, not to be confused with Rav Yaakov Emden- who was the *Yaavetz*) quotes a *gemara* in *Pesachim* (117b) which he seems to say applies to *rachtzah*. The *gemara* discusses that *maror*, even though it will be dipped into *charoses*, does not need a washing before since the washing had already been done by *urchatz*. However, the *gemara* explains, since there is a lot of time between *urchatz* and *maror*, and since we go through the *Haggadah* in between, there will be *hesech hadas* (distraction) so *maror* does require a new washing beforehand. The *Simchas Yaavetz* says that this required washing for *maror* is being done by *rachtzah*; *rachtzah* is killing two birds with one stone, we wash for both the *matzah* and the *maror*. Additionally, he explains, from this we see that the *halacha* is not like Rashbam, who says that the *birchas haadama* of *karpas* is sufficient for *maror* as well, and a new *bracha* is not required, and is rather like the *Tosfos*, who say that the *Haggadah* (*Maggid*) automatically causes *hesech hadas* and thus requires a new *bracha* for *maror*.

The *Gra* points out that this *halacha* is applied to the end of *maggid*, and therefore a new *birchas hagafen* is required for the second cup of wine since *maggid* was in between, causing *hesech hadas*.

Rav Shimshon Raphael Hirsch mentions a *halacha* that since everyone is required to stay quiet from *rachtzah* until after finishing

korech (as mentioned above- the washing is for *maror* as well), it is very important for the *baal haseder* to a) explain (especially to little kids) what is about to happen and what everyone must do, and b) to set aside the correct *shiurim* for *matzah*, *maror*, and *korech*.

Rav Hirsch then uses *rachtzah* as a venue to expound on the purpose of washing in general, an answer which applies all-the-more-so at the *seder*. He explains that every action a person does should be performed in a nice, *bakavodik* way. This doesn't mean that one is required to quell and squash every animalistic desire, but rather one should do what needs to be done to satisfy those animalistic desires, but it must be done *bikavod*, thereby transforming it into an action done *l'sheim Shamayim*. It is in this way that any action, even the most animalistic, can be transformed into a *mitzvah*. If it is done when and how God wants, then that person "will stand as a humanly Divine being with his whole life, including its physical aspect, in the service of God."

This is exactly what is being accomplished through washing the hands prior to eating. Since the way to satisfy the animalistic craving for food is done through the same means as how one does what makes a human unique - speech - *Chazal* use the meal as a way to ennoble the animal inside man. One should approach their meal as one would approach an act of holiness: via preparation and cleansing oneself. Doing this as we are commanded elevates the animalistic eating, to a spiritually divine endeavor. This is also how one makes their table into a purely Divine *mizbeach*; it is transforming the item used for animalistic cravings into an object used for sanctification, as the *gemara* in *Chagigah* (27a) says:

רבי יוחנן וריש לקיש דאמרי תרנויהו: בנמן שפית המקדש קיים — מנבח מכפר על אדם,
עקשיו — ישלחנו של אדם מכפר עליו

"Rabbi Yochanan and Reish Lakish both say: at a time when the *Beis Hamikdash* is standing it would atone for people, and now that it is destroyed, a person's table atones for them and takes its place."

The table of the Jewish home has taken the place of the *mizbeach*, and, through washing prior to eating, or doing any animalistic desire *bikavod* and as *Hashem* wants, the table, or whatever action is being done, is transformed into something spiritually Divine. This idea is especially significant on *Pesach*, when the entire *seder* is

a spiritually elevated meal, and during which we commemorate our being chosen by *Hashem* to fully serve Him in a *bikavodik* way.

Even with regard to *rachtzah*, something seemingly so mundane and insignificant, at the *seder* has tremendous depth and meaning. So even though the elementary school *Rabbeim* don't supply *divrei Torah* for something like *rachtzah*, maybe something really can be shared at this time in the *seder* (even though, in reality, who has the time, and the courage, to share a *Dvar Torah* right when everyone's getting up to finally, after waiting many hours, wash and eat?)

MOTZI
Bread of Hashem

Yehuda Laub ('26)

The *Motzi* section of the Seder is a crucial part of our celebration of *Pesach*. It symbolizes the importance of bread in our lives and reminds us of our ancestors' journey from slavery to freedom. We eat *matzah*, which is a simple, unleavened bread, to represent the haste with which our ancestors left Egypt.

In *Halachah*, bread plays a central role in many rituals, including *Shabbos* and *yom tov*. The *brachah* recited before eating bread, "*hamotzi lechem min haaretz*," recognizes the significance of the physical world in our spiritual growth. It teaches us that the physical world is not something to be shunned or avoided, but rather an essential part of our spiritual development.

Moreover, the *Motzi* section and *brochah* teach us about gratitude. When we recite the *brochah* on the *matzah* during *Motzi* we are acknowledging God's role in providing us with our daily bread. We are reminded to be thankful for all the blessings in our lives, no matter how small they may seem.

As Jews, we can take these lessons from the *Motzi* section of our *seder* and apply them to our daily lives. We can recognize the importance of bread in our rituals and practice gratitude for our blessings. We can also acknowledge the significance of the physical world in our spiritual growth and strive to live our lives in a way that reflects this understanding.

In conclusion, the *Motzi* section of the *Pesach* Seder offers all Jews an important lesson about the role of bread in our lives, the importance of the physical world in our spiritual growth, and the power of gratitude. Let us take these lessons to heart and strive to live our lives in accordance with these values.

MATZAH**Everything It's Cracked Up To Be***Dev Cochman (23)*

Matzah is not only the braille version of the *Haggadah*, but is the bread of our affliction. It is also known as poor man's bread. These two other phrases are incorrect ways to describe the beautiful *mitzvah* of *matzah*.

When the *Malachim* visited Avraham Avinu's nephew Lot they happened to visit him during the holiday of *Pesach*. This can be seen in the *Torah* because Lot served them *matzahs* and they had a big feast. The tragic story that happened to Lot happened right after this meal. The town he was living in was destroyed and he was not allowed to look back, but this actually happened to redeem him from living in a bad environment. This is similar to the story of the *Bnei Yisroel* who suffered through centuries of hardships in Egypt. They were told that they were going to have the opportunity to leave Egypt and they left without turning back. On their way out they baked *matzah* because they did not have time to let it rise and become bread, so they ran into their freedom with *matzah* on their backs. In both of these stories written down in the *Torah*, *matzah* is seen before they are freed from the bad place they were living in. When we taste *matzah* we should think of our freedom and how rich we are to be able to taste the bread of our redemption.

The *Torah* commands us to eat the *korban pesach* along with *marror* and *matzah* on the night of the fourteenth day of *Nissan*, but nowadays we no longer have the opportunity to eat them together because we can't sacrifice a *korban pesach*. On the other hand there is a separate commandment to eat *matzah* on the night of the fourteenth day of *Nissan* which we still have today. In every bite of *matzah* that goes into our mouth we should think about how full it is with the opportunity to do a *mitzvah* that comes once a year. The *Rokeach* says that one who eats *matzah* with full intent to fulfill the *mitzvah* properly on all seven days of *Pesach* becomes a partner of *Hashem* in the creation of the world. The *Tiferes Shlomo* says that since the *passuk* in *Vayikra* (6:9) says that "[m]atzos shall be eaten in a holy place" we need to purify our bodies in preparation to put the holy *matzah* in our mouths.

The *Satmar Rav* said that the *mitzvah* of *matzah* is so special that it goes straight to *shamayim*. *Tzadikim* yearn for this opportunity with strength that is so tremendous to the point that their souls come close to leaving their bodies when they eat *matzah*. He says that since most Jews are unable to reach this point of understanding the power of *matzah* it goes up to *shamayim* anyways. The *matzah* truly has the power to make one rich even though it costs a lot of money. It is a true test of *mesiras nefesh*, testing one's ability to sacrifice money in this world for portions beyond imaginable in the world to come.

Matzah is not the bread of affliction or poor man's bread. It is actually the exact opposite. We should all have *kavanah* to eat the *matzah* this year with the thoughts of being free and rich in *schar* in *olam habbah*. We also need to realize as the *matzah* crumbles with each bite that it is everything it's cracked up to be.

Two Mitzvos of Matzah

David Tanner ('18)

Leil Haseder is the ultimate celebration of *mesorah*, of the transmission of Torah from parent to child and teacher to student. It is thus fitting for me to share one of the first shiurim I had the privilege of hearing from my *rebbe*, Rav Mayer Twersky *shlit"a*.

The *mishnah* in *Pesachim* 35a discusses the requirements of *matzah*, such as which grains are able to be used. The *matzah* must be *shemurah*, guarded for the sake of *matzah*. The *mishnah* begins with the statement, “These are the things with which a person fulfills his obligation on *Pesach*.” Rashi (s.v. *eilu devarim*) comments: “because of the obligation of *matzah* on the first night, for he is obligated to eat *matzah*, as it is written, ‘In the evening eat *matzos*’ (*Shemos* 12:18)”. What prompted Rashi to write this explanation? Don’t we know that there is an obligation to eat *matzah*?

Rav Gershon Zaks *z"l* quoted the Meleches Shlomo who asks why does the aforementioned *mishnah* say “these are the things with which one fulfills his obligation on *Pesach*” instead of “his obligation to eat *matzah*”? He points out that the *mishnah* uses the same language on 39a regarding the species which can be used for *marror*. The Meleches Shlomo explains that the *mishnah* uses this language to indicate that it is also referring to the *matzah* and *marror* which are eaten alongside the *Korban Pesach*. In addition to the independent *mitzvah* to eat *matzah*, there is an additional *chiyuv* of “they shall eat [the *korban pesach*] with *matzah* and *marror*” (*Devarim* 9:11). The *mishnah* is teaching us that the requirements it lists apply to both *chiyuvim* of *matzah*.

However, the Tzlach argues on the Meleches Shlomo, and says that there are separate requirements for the *matzah* eaten independently and the *matzah* eaten alongside the *Korban Pesach*. The *mishnah* is only referring to the independent *mitzvah* of *matzah*, which is Rashi’s intention. Rashi says “he is obligated to eat *matzah*, as it is written, ‘In the evening eat *matzos*’”—the *matzah* which is independent of the *Korban Pesach*. However, the *matzah* eaten together with the *Korban Pesach* does not need to be *shemurah*.

The *Gemara* in *Pesachim* 115a mentions a *machlokes* about whether “*mitzvos mevatlos zu es zu*,” whether *mitzvos* nullify each

other. For example, is a *kohen* allowed to make a sandwich combining *terumah* and the meat of a *korban*, or do we say that when the two *mitzvah* foods are eaten simultaneously, they cancel each other out? The *Gemara* identifies the opinion that *mitzvos* are not *mevatel* each other with Hillel, who would wrap *matzah* and *maror* (and according to some girsa'os also the *Korban Pesach*) and eat them together, while the opinion that *mitzvos* are *mevatel* each other is identified with the *Chachamim* who argue on Hillel and say the *matzah* and *marror* may be eaten either together or separately. *Tosafos* (s.v. *ela*) explains that according to the *Chachamim*—who hold “*al matzos u'mrorim yochluhu*” comes to teach that the *matzah* and *marror* may be eaten together but do not need to be—clearly in the absence of a *passuk* eating the two foods together would be forbidden because *mitzvos mevatlos zu es zu*. However, since Hillel understands the *passuk* “*al matzos u'mrorim yochluhu*” as giving an obligation (*lechatchilah*) to eat the *matzah* and *marror* together, he must hold in general that there is no problem of *mitzvos* being *mevatel* each other, and therefore does not understand the *passuk* as teaching that they may be eaten together, but that they should be eaten together.

The question which arises is, which are the two different *mitzvos* present in Hillel's sandwich? Eating *matzah* and *marror* together with the *Korban Pesach* is a component of the same *mitzvah* of eating the *Korban Pesach*. If so, why is the discussion of “*mitzvos mevatlos zu es zu*,” which discusses how two different *mitzvos* affect each other, at all relevant? Rav Twersky explained that Hillel was also fulfilling the *mitzvah* of eating *matzah* the night of the *Seder* independent of the *Korban Pesach* with the *matzah* he ate to accompany the *Korban Pesach*. The *Gemara* was thus asking whether the independent *mitzvah* of *matzah*, which is also serving as the *matzah* accompanying the *Korban Pesach*, is *mevatel* the other components of the *koreich sandwich*. Rav Twersky noted that this seems to strongly support the position of the Melech Shlomo, that the requirements for the *matzah* accompanying the *Korban Pesach* are identical to those of the independent *mitzvah* of *matzah*, since Hillel was using the same *matzah* for both *mitzvos*.

MARROR

The Vilna Gaon's Gematriya

Yisrael-David Rosenberg (23)

My father is fond of a particular *gematriya* attributed to the Vilna Gaon. In *Maggid*, we refer to the fact that “*Hakadosh Baruch Hu chishav es hakeitz*”, “Hashem carefully worked out the end of the slavery”. What was this calculation? *Bnei Yisrael* were really supposed to be slaves in Egypt for 400 years, as stated in the *Bris Bein Habesarim* (*Bereishis* 15:13). However, they were released after only 210 years. Yaakov Avinu had alluded to this when he said “*redu shamah*” (רדו-שָׁמָּה) go down there” (*Bereishis* 42:2) when instructing his sons to travel to Egypt to purchase food. Rashi notes, based on the *midrash* in *Bereishis Rabbah* (91:2) that the word “*redu*”, “go down”, is chosen and not simply “*lechu*”, “go” because the phrase really hints to how long *Bnei Yisrael* will ultimately spend in exile and slavery in *Mitzrayim*. “*Redu*” (רדו) in *gematriya* is the numerical equivalent of 210 and, thus, Yaakov is telling his sons you will spend “210 there”.

So our calculation so far is: $400 - 210 = 190$.

The line we cited from *Maggid* spoke of the “*keitz*”, the time that would be the end of the slavery. [1] “*Keitz*” (קֵץ) in *gematriya* is equal to 190. The *keitz* Hashem calculated was *keitz*. Hashem made a calculation for those 190 years.

A common reason given for why they got out early was that the slavery was so bitter that it was as if they had suffered for 400 years in only 210. The *passuk* that talks about the bitterness of the slavery is in the very beginning of *Sefer Shemos*:

וַיִּמְרְרוּ אֶת-חַיֵּיהֶם בְּעִבְדָּה קָשָׁה

“They [the Egyptians] embittered their [*Bnei Yisrael*] lives with hard work” (*Shemos* 1:14)

The Vilna Gaon points out that the *ta'amei hamikra*, the trope melody signs, on the words “*veyemareru es chayeihem*” are *kadma ve'azla*. The meaning of these names is *kidmu vehalchu* – they went early. He adds that if you add up the *Gematriya* value of the words *kadma ve'azla* (קדמא ואזלא) you get 190, the exact number of years that *Bnei*

Yisrael got out early.

So to review: Hashem calculated the *keitz*, 190 years early, that *Bnei Yisrael* would have an end to their slavery and leave *Mitzrayim*, that they would be *kidmu vehalchu*, *kadma ve'azla*, because of *veyemareru es chayeihem*, how the Egyptians embittered their lives.

Chag Sameach!

[1] At the end of his life, Yaakov *Avinu* says that he will tell his sons what is to become of them at “the end of days” (*Bereishis* 49:1). Again, Rashi, citing *Bereishis Rabbah* (98:2), notes that his true intention was to reveal the “*keitz*”, but it was hidden from him. The word “*keitz*” also refers to the end of the exile, but it is typically taken not as a reference to end of *Galus Mitzrayim* which had already been hinted to by Yaakov with “*redu*”, but as a reference to the end of the final exile, *Galus Edom*, which we are currently in.

KOREICH

Together or Separate?*Natan Horowitz (23)*

There is a *machlokes* amongst *Chazal* in how we eat *matzah* and *marror*. Most of the *chachamim* agree that they should be eaten separately so as not to bundle together the *mitzvos* and make it seem like we are trying to rush through them. However, Hillel still argues that despite the *gemara* in *Masechet Brachos*, which rebukes those who combine *mitzvos*, the *matzah* and *marror* should be eaten together in a sandwich. But why does Hillel disagree with so many *chachamim* and contradict the *gemara* in *Masechet Brachos*?

Rav Kook provides a phenomenal answer, and it lies within the symbolism associated with *matzah* and *marror*.

Matzah represents freedom. It is devoid of any external influences from other ingredients or chemicals as it solely contains flour and water. In this way it represents the deep independence that the Jewish people have now acquired by ridding themselves of foreign culture and oppression. It also contains no unique flavor or shape, thereby allowing it to be imprinted on with the new holy values of the Torah.

Marror's bitterness represents servitude. However, servitude is not always bad. It can sometimes be the work and dedication that is required to achieve a specific long-term goal. This is true by the Jewish people who must now apply themselves to the service of Hashem. This, in contrast to our servitude in Egypt, is a pleasant one.

The *machlokes* inherently comes down to this:

The *chachamim* believed that freedom and servitude had to be separate, that they could not infringe on one another. When it is appropriate to be displaying a spirit of freedom, the *chachamim* feel that it should not be disrupted by a feeling of servitude. Similarly, when it is time to use the discipline of servitude, it should not be overtaken by a desire for independence and freedom.

Hillel, however, wanted to show that these two concepts were not contradictory and could, in fact, be joined together. He wanted to emphasize how these two seemingly different values could be used together. He believed that our newfound sense of freedom, when combined with the lofty servitude of Hashem, will only lead us to serve Him to the best of our potential.

Chag sameach and enjoy those sandwiches!

SHULCHAN OREICH***Shulchan Oreich Isn't Part of the Seder, Right?****Elisha Price (23)*

Every child's favorite part of the *Seder* is when, after two or three hours of *maggid* and forcing themselves to eat sizable portions of lettuce and *matzah* (and then both together!), finally it is time for the *seudah*. Finally, they get to eat real food. However nice that feeling is, it is a little bit strange that the *seudah* is part of the *Seder* at all. Of course we're going to eat; every *Yom Tov* has a corresponding *seudah*, but what makes *Shulchan Orech* so different that it is counted as a *chelek* (part or portion) of the *Seder*? What makes this question all the more troubling is that the Rambam (*Hilchos Chametz U'matzah* 8:9), *Tur*, *Shulchan Aruch* (both in OC 477[:1]), and *Chayei Adam* (both in *klal* 130:13-14 and *seder bi'ktzrah* 12) all *pasken* that you need to have a *seudah* at the *Seder*. So what is so special about this *seudah* that it is considered a *chelek* of the *Seder* just like *Maggid* and *Hallel*?

Rav Shamshon Rafael Hirsch, *kidarko*, has a very simple yet profound answer. He argues that the purpose of *Shulchan Orech* is to be mundane. Meaning, we were taken out of Egypt and transformed from being *avdei paroh* to *avdei Hashem*, which means that every element of our lives is now supposed to be in service of Him. *Shulchan Orech* is the expression that even the most mundane activities - like eating and drinking - can be expressions of our service to *Hashem* if we consecrate them as such. Thus, we make *Shulchan Orech* a part of our *Seder*, placing the mundane activities contained therein next to the highly spiritual activities of *sipur yetzias metzrayim* and *achilas matzah u'marror*.

It is possible to extrapolate from that a message that applies every *Shabbos* and *Yom Tov*. Why do we have a *mitzvah* of *seudas Yom Tov* or *seudas Shabbos*? According to Rav Hirsch (although, admittedly, *le'inyan Shabbos vi'Yom Tov* this is not an original idea of his) the purpose of the juxtaposition of the *seudah* to *Kiddush* accomplishes exactly the same thing: sanctifying the mundane in the service of G-d.

While that is a nice answer, it's a little bit unsatisfyingly simple. The Rav (quoted by Rav Yitzchak Lichtenstein), however, pre-

sents a much more classically Brisker approach. He says that there is a fundamental problem with eating a meal here in the first place because, since we ate *matzah* already (according to the Rambam you're supposed to eat more *matzah* after *koreich*), who is to say that isn't my *afikomen*? And, as everyone knows, you absolutely may not eat a meal after eating the *afikomen*! So, says the Rav, the purpose of including *Shulchan Orech* in the *seder ha'seder* is to make sure that *memeila* the *matzah* we ate before the *seudah* isn't going to be our *afikomen* because we will all have in mind that we need to eat the *seudah* before the *afikomen*. Thus, the addition of *Shulchan Orech* in the *Seder* isn't because it has a particular significance, but as a *matir* to eat the *seudah* (by making sure the earlier *matzah* wasn't considered the *afikomen*).

While this is satisfying *lomdish*, it somewhat minimizes the importance of *Shulchan Orech*, reducing it from being equal in status to *Maggid* (a *mitzvah de'oraysa*) to a mere *matir*, a technicality. However, there are other approaches that, I believe, are both rich in substance and allow us to continue to view *Shulchan Orech* as our favorite part of the *Seder* (because, even though I spoke in vague terms about 'children' in the very beginning, it really applies to just about everyone who is honest with themselves).

Rav Schachter, based on a comment by the *Netziv*, writes that the role of *Shulchan Orech* in the *Seder* (partially based on the Rambam that says we should be eating more *matzah* before the *seudah*) is to function as a sort of *Korban Todah* separate from the *Korban Pesach*. In other words, *Shulchan Orech* is the climax of *Maggid*: once we've told the story of how *Hashem* saved us, it is only natural that immediately we would want to thank Him. And how do we do that? By "bringing" a "*Korban Todah*" immediately afterwards. Similar to what the Rav presented above, this is not a *seudas Yom Tov* like any other, it is our modern expression of a *Korban Todah*.

There is one last approach I'd like to discuss, even though anyone who knows me would agree this is not the type of source I would normally quote. Once more taking a step back from *lomdus*, Rav Yechezkel Sarna, a *talmid* of Rav Nosson Tzvi Finkel and Rav Shimon Shkop, argues that there is a very simple reason for *Shulchan Orech's* inclusion in the *Seder*, which, like the Rav and Rav

Schachter's answers but unlike Rav Hirsch's answer, distinguishes *Shulchan Orech* from other *seudos shel mitzvah*. Remember our scenario in the very beginning, the child (or adult) who just sat through an inspiring but lengthy *Maggid* and was forced to consume what approximates cardboard and grass immediately thereafter? Well, this person is hungry, tired, and needs a break. Says Rav Sarna, that is the role of *Shulchan Orech*. It allows us to stop, take a break from the heavy parts of the *Seder*, eat something that actually looks like food, and all without feeling like we're being *mevatel* the *Seder*. In other words, *Shulchan Orech* is an example of G-d looking after our dignity and our health when He crafted the *mitzvos*.

And this answer isn't exclusive: it could very well be that *Ha-shem* insisted we eat a meal now, so He inserterted *Shulchan Orech* into the *Seder* as a *matir* for that meal or that He gave us the opportunity to use that meal as more than food, but as a *Korban Todah* as well. And of course, this fundamentally, as Rav Hirsch explained from the outset, is all just an array of ways to consecrate the mundane act of eating into an act of unspeakable holiness.

TZAFUN

Eating the *Afikoman* in Different Places*Moshe Lieberman (24)*

We first learn about the strange idea of the *Afikoman* from the *Mishnah* in *Pesachim* (10:8) which states: “*Ein Maftirim Achar Hapesach Afikomen.*” Simply, this translates to “you can’t add on after the *Korban Pesach*, *Afikoman*. Now, in the *Gemara*, Rav explains this ambiguous line in the *Mishnah* to mean that you can’t eat the “*korban Pesach*” (*Afikoman*) in one place with one group of people, and then go over to another place with a different group of people. Rav rules this way because he feared that if people go to eat the “*Korban Pesach*” in another place, the members of that group may offer him some of their *Afikoman*, and consequently, he will violate the *pasuk* of “*B’bais Echad Ye’achel,*” that you can only eat the *Korban Pesach* in one house (*Shemos* 12:46). Although this *pasuk* is discussing a rule regarding the *Korban Pesach*, it still seemingly applies to the *Afikoman*, which is *Zecher L’korban Pesach*. Therefore, our colloquial *Afikoman* must ascribe to the same rules as the *Korban Pesach*. However, Shmuel interprets this line in the *Mishnah* differently. Shmuel explains that the *Mishnah* meant to say that you may not eat anything even within your own group (or if you’re by yourself) after eating the *Afikoman*. Shmuel rules this way because of the concept of having the taste of *Matzah* in your mouth the whole night. Moreover, the Rashbam points out that Shmuel clearly agrees with Rav’s interpretation that you may not go to another group to have the *Afikoman*.

The *Rema* fits with the view of Rav and agrees that “*Ein Maftirim Achar Hapesach Afikomen*” means you may not eat the *Afikoman* in two different places. For instance, one may not eat half of the *Afikoman* in one’s own house and then proceed to eat the other half in their neighbor’s house. However, the *Mishnah Berurah* explains that you may not even eat the *Afikoman* at two different tables within one house. For example, if one is eating one’s *seder* at a hotel, they may not eat part of the *Afikoman* at their table and then walk 10 feet over to the next table and finish it there.

But, let’s say, one is eating the *Afikoman* at their table and needs to tend to their baby upstairs, and must take the *matzah* with

them because it's about to be *chatzos*. Is this considered eating in two different places? Says Rav Shmuel Kaminetsky that the only problem with going somewhere else within one house is when there is more than one group eating in that house. Therefore, this case would not violate "*B'bais Echad Ye'achel*." The only problem that one would run into is when one goes from group to group within one house, similar to the hotel case.

Yet, this interpretation of Rav Kaminetsky seems to be a little bit of a stretch within the words of the *Mishnah Berurah*, who said that the problem is that it *looks* like two groups. Additionally, the *Nitei Gavriel* says that for one to even walk around while eating the Afikoman may be an issue. Even more than that, he says, explaining a *Gemara* that discusses two groups looking at each other while eating the *Afikoman*, that one may not even be able to turn one's neck while in the process of eating! Essentially, Rav Shmuel Kaminetsky is more lenient, while the *Nitei Gavriel* holds more strictly.

BAREICH***Shefoch Chamascha: The Jewish Approach to War****Dovid Wartelsky (20)*

Shefoch Chamascha is placed after *bentching* in the *Barech* step of the *Seder*. There is a common misconception that when we open the door for *Shefoch Chamascha*, we open the door for Eliyahu *Hanavi*. This is incorrect; the reason we open the door is to show we aren't afraid of danger, since Hashem will protect us. So, if the myth of opening the door for Eliyahu *Hanavi* is wrong, what exactly is *Shefoch Chamascha* about?

First, a bit of Jewish History. In 17th century Europe, priests would go into their respective churches and give fiery, anti-semitic sermons against the non-believers, or the Jews. After being inspired and riled up by their priests, Churchgoers would burst out of the Church and chase after any Jews they could find, most of the time killing many. This wasn't an abnormal occurrence either; it usually happened every week, particularly with the infamous Blood Libels around *Pesach* time, where the Priests would kidnap a Christian child, kill him, put his blood in containers, and then put his body along with the blood in a Jew's basement. The Priests would then go back to their Churches and inform the Churchgoers about the horrible act that the Jews committed in order to put the blood in their *Pesach Matzah*, after which they would go on a killing spree.

Now, back to *Shefoch Chamascha*. If we look at the wording, the first phrase reads:

"שפוך חמתך אל הגוים אשר לא ידעוך ועל הממלכות אשר בשמך לא קראו. כי
אכל את יעקב ואת נוהו השמו"

"Pour out your wrath unto the nations of the world that don't know you and on the kingdoms that don't proclaim your name for they have devoured Yaakov and laid his name to waste."

We are asking Hashem to smite all the nations of the world! How is this any different than what the Christian Priests did in 17th century Europe?

The answer to this question is very simple. While the Christians took the action themselves, in our case, we are praying to the Supreme God of the universe. If people do something, it is not necessarily a just thing to do; the Christians took their law into their own hands and killed Jews unjustly. On the other hand, the supreme deity, God, is just in everything He does; the Jews daven to Hashem to smite the non-believers, and if (and when) He does, we will know it is just, by defini-

tion.

The next phrase reads:

"שפוך עליהם זעמך וחרון אפך ישיגם"

"Pour out your anger and overtake them".

Again, this varies from the Christian approach. Whereas the Christians poured out their anger on the Jews of their own accord, *Bnei Yisrael* are consulting with Hashem first.

This concept of asking Hashem before going to war isn't new. In the times of *Tanach*, before *Bnei Yisrael* went to war, they had a ceremony led by the *Kohen Mashuach Milchamah*, the Priest who was designated for war. As part of that ceremony, the *Kohen* reassured them that Hashem was on their side and that they shouldn't be afraid:

"כי ה' אלקיכם ההלך עמכם להלחם לכם עם אויביכם להושיע אתכם"

"Because Hashem your God, that walks with you to fight for you against your enemies, will save you". (*Devarim* 20:4)

In other words, in Jewish wars, the people aren't fighting, but rather Hashem is. That is why the Jewish army fasts on the day it goes to war (*Shemuel* I 14:24), to show that their physical strength would not affect the outcome of the battle.

The final phrase reads:

"תרדף העם ותשמידם מתחת שמי ה'"

"Chase them with anger and destroy the people that are beneath the heavens of God".

Once again, we find another difference between the Jewish War Ethic and that of the nations of the world. The Jewish army doesn't choose to go to war on their own, instead deciding purely based on Hashem's decision. If Hashem wanted the Jews to pursue the desired target, He would give the word and *Bnei Yisrael* would immediately spring into action. The non-Jews, on the other hand, attacked those who their clergy determined to be "non-believers"; there was no Divine input, and therefore no restraint.

The lesson that can be learned is that Judaism is a religion of action sparked by faith, not faith sparked by action. As can be seen by the paragraph of *Shefoch Chamascha* and the essence of Jewish war, we are a religion that bases our agenda on God instead of God being placed in convenient circumstances to fit our agenda.

Have a *Chag Kasher Vesameach!*

HALLEL**Trust the Process***Aaron Sisser (23)*

It was in the midst of a battle. A young soldier was fighting in the front lines, only about fifty feet away from enemy troops. The battle was already very gruesome, but it was coming to a close. The side of the young soldier was winning. All that was remaining was to kill the general sitting on his white horse in the center of the enemy lines. After that, the remaining enemy troops would scatter. The young man found a moment of respite, and aimed his shotgun. He focused, aimed, set, and was about to pull the trigger to end the war. All of a sudden, though, he heard a command from his general: "RETREAT!" This left our young soldier with a split-second all-important decision to make. Will he take the shot to end the battle, or will he listen to his general?

When dealing with the section of the Seder known as Hallel, a famous question that pops up is why is Hallel split into two parts, with some coming before the meal and some coming after? Why not just say it all at once, like we do on any other time when we say these words? What is the reason for this divide?

The Netziv answers that the question is slightly mistaken, as Hallel is not actually split at all. The Netziv teaches that the meal is a continuation of Hallel. Wait, that doesn't seem right? The Netziv explains this concept by looking at the beginning, middle, and end of Hallel in a new light. The first part of Hallel - the part before the meal that we say during Maggid - refers to the actual Yetzias Mitzrayim. That makes sense considering its location in the Haggadah. Next up is the meal itself, which is actually just a continuation of Hallel. This simply means that the meal has a royal atmosphere, similar to how our nation was so holy and royal when Hashem took us out of Egypt. After that, we have the last remaining part of Hallel - the part that actually occurs during the "Hallel" part of the Seder. This, the Netziv explains, comes to symbolize the future redemption that Hashem will perform for us during the coming of Mashiach.

The Netziv was able to take a step back and realize the bigger picture of Hallel. Hallel is meant to convey something to us. It is

meant to make us realize all of the awesome things that Hashem has done for us, is doing for us, and will do for us in the future. Only if we take a look at the bigger picture will we be able to realize the full extent of the words that we utter each night at the Seder. This is a big *mussar*: Sometimes, one needs to take a step back to realize the overall meaning of a situation.

Now, what decision did the young soldier make? Well, he had always followed commands from his general before, and so he decided on that course of action instinctively. He turned around and ran as fast as he could in the reverse direction. All of a sudden, he heard a big explosion where he had been standing just five seconds earlier. A small grenade had exploded. It was thrown from a member of the enemy forces standing in the trees adjacent to the battle field, and only the general had been able to spot it from his vantage point. However, despite not knowing the reason for the general's cryptic command, the young soldier listened, and it saved his life. The young soldier's side went on to win the war shortly afterwards.

All of this teaches us that sometimes we may not understand the bigger picture. However, if we take a step back to look at the grander ideas behind things, we may come to understand that things are more than what they may simply seem.

*NIRTZAH**CHAD GADYA***The Real Victim***Levi Burg ('23) & Avrohom Rivkin ('23)*

Rav Yehonossan Eybeschutz was one of the *gedolei hador* of the 18th century and despite his controversy, he is recognized as one of the Torah giants of his generation. Much has been noted of Rav Eybeschutz's incredible mind from an early age, but what many don't know is that he was also very witty.

A story is told that he was once bothering his little sister, when a man approached and told him to stop. Little Yehonossan then asked the man a question. Are you familiar with *Chad Gadya*, he asked? The man nodded in response. "Well then", Yonasan retorted, "let me ask you a question. Assuming the cat was in the wrong for eating the goat, that would mean that the dog was in the right for biting the cat thereby reprimanding him. Therefore, the stick would be in the wrong for hitting the dog, and the fire would be in the right for burning the stick. The water would then be in the wrong, the ox in the right, the slaughterer in the wrong, and the Angel of Death in the right. But if that's the case, it would seem that *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* was in the wrong?! That can't be! Clearly, Hashem was in the right, the Angel of Death in the wrong, the slaughterer in the right, the ox in the wrong, the water in the right, the fire in the wrong, and the stick in the right.

"Therefore, the dog", young Yehonossan said, pointing to the man, "was in the wrong for reprimanding the cat", now pointing to himself, "who was tormenting the goat", Yehonossan finished, pointing to his sister. To that, the man gave sharp, little Yehonossan a similarly sharp smack across the face. Have a nice *Pesach*.

L'SHANAH HABAAH **Next Year in Jerusalem**

Rabbi Moshe Rosenberg ('78)

The phrase “*leshanah haba'ah beyerushalayim*” enters our liturgy only twice a year: at the conclusion of the *Yom Kippur tefillah* and at the end of the *Seder of Pesach*. Why specifically those two occurrences?

Rabbi Avrohom Davis, author of the Metzudah series of translations, is said to have suggested the following approach to Rav Yitzchak Hutner, Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivas Chaim Berlin (Rav Hutner is reported to have responded, “אמת זיין קען,” “It might actually be true—which, from him, was high praise...): On most holidays, we can perform the central *Mitzvah* of the holiday. On *Rosh Hashanah*, we can blow *shofar*. On *Sukkos*, we wave a *lulav* and sit in a *sukkah*. On *Purim*, we read the *Megillah* and engage in the other commandments of the day.

Only on *Yom Kippur* and *Pesach* does the absence of a *Beis Hamikdash* prevent us from performing the central obligation of the day—we cannot do the *avodah* of the *Kohen Gadol* nor sacrifice the *Korban Pesach*. It is for this reason that we conclude these days with a prayer that next year we be able to observe the holiday in its totality, in a rebuilt Jerusalem.

The *Haggadah Ayelet Hashachar* relates a of trip Rav Avraham Yitzchak Hakohen Kook made to the US, along with other prominent Israeli *Rabbanim*, to raise desperately needed funds for Torah institutions in Israel. At one well attended event, a wealthy donor promised a significant contribution on condition that the Chief Rabbi answer one simple question: Why, when you are living in Israel, do you still end your *Seder* with the words *leshanah haba'ah beyerushalayim*?

Rav Kook replied, “There are two answers to your question. First, we add the word “*Ha benuyah*,” because our Temple is not yet rebuilt. Second—“ and here the shadow of a smile played across his face—“We are praying that next year we should merit that all aspects of our being should spend *Pesach* in Israel—we should be there physically, spiritually, and mentally. It should not be a repeat of this year, when even on *Pesach*, we were not totally present in Israel because we were planning a trip to the US to raise needed funds immediately after the holiday.”

Rav Kook received the donation.

SHABBOS CHOL HAMOED & SHIR HASHIRIM**The Journey is the Destination***Aryeh Maneritz (23)**Adapted from Reb Meilech's Haggadah*

In *Shir Hashirim* we find the phrase:

מֶה יָפִי פְעָמֶיךָ בַּנְעָלִים בַּת־נָדִיב

“How beautiful are your footsteps in sandals, O Daughters of nobles” (7:2).

Like every *passuk* in this beautiful and intricate *megillah*, there are multiple ways to interpret these words. The *Gemara* in *Chagigah* (3a) comes to explain that the word “*fe’amayich*”, which we translated as “footsteps”, also means “times” which is a reference to the *Shalosh Regalim* (triannual pilgrimage to Jerusalem). We now see how the “footsteps of daughters” are alluding to the footsteps of *Bnei Yisroel* going up to Yerushalayim.

If Shlomo Hamelech (the author of *Shir Hashirim*) wanted to praise *Bnei Yisroel* for our long journey to the *Makom Hamikdash*, why does the *passuk* single out our shoes? Moreover, the *Gemara* tells us (*Berachos* 54a) that before entering the gates to *Har Habayis*, one must take off their shoes. Why is the very specific article of clothing that is used to praise us for the *Shalosh Regalim* not even allowed to come with us to the climax of the event?

Traveling is not easy, whether you are in the back of a *minivan* sitting in a pool of *matzah* crumbs on the way to the zoo with your younger siblings, or taking a three-day trek with your camel and some basic food heading to the *Beis Hamikdash*. There are inevitably a lot of challenges and hardships that occur on the road, and that's the whole point! Once our shoes come off and we are consumed in the feeling of Hashems' presence, our anxieties and troubles melt away. So what's so special about the shoes when we are wearing them?

Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach quoting the *Vilna Maggid* explains: when we are walking and start to struggle, even before our shoes come off, that is when we bring Hashem the most joy. “*Mah*

yafu”, How beautiful are you - when? *bane’alim*! When we have our shoes on! When we are traveling! When not everything goes our way, when our *middos* are pushed to their limits, when we really don't want to wake up for *Shacharis*. Hashem loves it when we are fighting the *yetzer hara*. Although *Mashiach* will be the ultimate climax of our journey through *galus*, it's the journey to get there that makes us great and is often more meaningful than the destination.

הסיבה בעיון

The Most Perplexing Line in *Hilchos Pesach*: A Primer

Yosef Weiner (23)

The *Shulchan Aruch* [1] notes that one who is eating with their primary *rebbe* need not perform *haseibah* (the leaning which is required at various moments at the *seder*). The *Magen Avrohom* [2] quotes the view of the *Maharashal* who applied the principle of *kol hapatur min hadavar v'oseihu nikra hedyot* - all who are exempt from something, and do it anyway are considered a simpleton - to anyone who performs *haseibah* despite being exempt. The *Chok Yaakov* [3] notes that the implication of the Rambam and *Kol Bo* is that one should not elect to do *haseibah* not because of an all-encompassing principle of *kol hapatur min hadavar v'oseihu nikra hedyot* but rather due to concerns of *moreh v'kavod rabo*, one would be failing to maintain the proper respect for their *rebbe*. The *Chok Yaakov* as well as the *Magen Avrohom* conclude that the principle of *kol hapatur min hadavar v'oseihu nikra hedyot* requires further analysis.

Indeed, this concept seems to contradict common religious practices and widespread notions. For example, numerous times throughout *Shulchan Aruch* and the later *poskim* the phrase *hamachmir tavo alav bracha* is employed and many are familiar with Chazal's dictum *kadesh atzmecha b'mutar lach*. [4]

Another intriguing contradiction exists between a well-known story of a certain prominent rabbinic luminary who, despite experiencing agonizing pain when ascending stairs, declined to make use of *shabbos* elevators - elevators that operate automatically on *shabbos* - even though he personally believed that their use was permissible. In a memorable moment, he is reported to have remarked "not everything that is *muttar* must one do." This story as well seems to run afoul of *kol hapatur min hadavar v'oseihu nikra hedyot*.

The primary focus of this piece will be to set out the various approaches to the parameters and limitations of the principle *kol hapatur min hadavar v'oseihu nikra hedyot*, especially considering these seeming contradictions. Analysis, however, will be somewhat limited for the sake of simplicity, brevity, and clarity.

The *Talmud Yerushalmi* [5] is the sole explicit *amoraic* source

for this principle. *Kol hapatur min hadavar v'oseihu nikra hedyot* is used in the critique of several *Rabonim* who interrupted a meal in order to go and daven *mincha*, even though they were technically permitted to finish their meal and daven later. [6]

The *Talmud Bavli*, on the other hand, never explicitly cites this principle. Indeed, this leads the *Shvus Yaakov* [7], in at least one context, to conclude that the *Talmud Bavli* disagreed with the principle. However, the *Rishonim* and *Poskim*, clearly, view the principle as normative, employing and dealing with it in a number of contexts. [8]

In recognition of the contradiction this principle seems to pose to normative *halachic* discourse and practice, there are numerous approaches in the *Rishonim* and *Achronim* as to how to define the parameters of this principle.

There are two primary approaches in the *Rishonim* as to the rationale for the principle of *kol hapatur min hadavar v'oseihu nikra hedyot*.

1. Some suggest [9] that it is an issue of *yuhara* - religious arrogance. Indeed, this is supported by the context of the *Yerushalmi* where the principle was quoted as it was discussing various issues of *yuhara*.

Others contend [10] that the issue is one of being *mosif al hatorah*.

It should be noted at the outset that there are two possible formulations of the issue of being *mosif al hatorah*. One is that it is inherently an issue to act in accordance with rules that are not found in the Torah. On the other hand, it can be suggested that it is an issue because when one is careful to do things that one is not commanded to do they demonstrate that their true motivation for performing *mitzvos*, in general, is because they like to do so and not because they are commanded. [11]

The first and perhaps most often relevant limitation is in a case where there is a dispute amongst the halachic authorities as to what the *Halacha* is. If the accepted *psak* is in accordance with one view, may one act stringently in accordance with another view?

The *Pri Megadim* [12] asserts that one can act in accordance with a view even if it is not accepted as the *psak halacha*. However, the *Ravya* [13] seems to disagree. Regarding reciting *krias shema*, the

Ravya states that if one has the opportunity to recite it during the proper time according to the *amoraic* view that the *Ravya* believes to reflect the basic *halachic* requirement then it would be problematic to be stringent and delay until later so as to fulfill the other views due to the principle of *kol hapatur min hadavar v'oseihu nikra hedyot*.

It is possible to suggest that this dispute is dependent upon differing understandings of the fundamental issue driving the principle of *kol hapatur min hadavar v'oseihu nikra hedyot*. If the underlying concern is *yuhara* then certainly *kol hapatur min hadavar v'oseihu nikra hedyot* still applies in a case where one is choosing to act in accordance with a view that is not the basic *halachic* requirement. However, if the underlying issue of *kol hapatur min hadavar v'oseihu nikra hedyot* is concerns of being *mosif al hatorah* then one can hardly be accused of being *mosif al hatorah* for acting in accordance with a valid view that is simply not one's basic *halachik* requirement. [14]

The first group of approaches in the limitation of *kol hapatur min hadavar v'oseihu* can be categorized as those who seem to believe that the underlying principle is *yuhara* and thus allow stringencies in cases where *yuhara* is not an issue. On the other hand, those who subscribe to the *mosif al hatorah* camp would likely dispute many of these limitations.

The *Ravya* [15], for example, understands that if one is *hurgal b'prishus* – they often act above the letter of the law - in a variety of areas then *kol hapatur min hadavar v'oseihu nikra hedyot* does not apply. This is based upon the understanding that the issue of *yuhara* does not apply if it is not out of character for one to act stringently. However, as the *Sdei Chemed* [16] points out that according to those who hold the underlying reason for *kol hapatur min hadavar v'oseihu nikra hedyot* is one is being *mosif al hatorah* such a distinction would be irrelevant.

Furthermore, the *Ravya* [17] in another context asserts that if it is common practice amongst the masses then there is no issue of *kol hapatur min hadavar v'oseihu nikra hedyot*. This is likewise based upon the understanding that *yuhara* is not a relevant concern when a practice is widespread.

In a similar fashion, the *Shvus Yaakov* [18] suggests that *kol hapatur min hadavar v'oseihu nikra hedyot* only applies to actions performed in public; however, in private one is free to be stringent in matters where they are formally exempt. Yet again this limitation exists because it negates the existence of *yuhara* in the present case. Thus, the *Chida* [19] who maintains that *kol hapatur min hadavar v'oseihu nikra hedyot* is not based upon *yuhara* disagrees with this limitation.

Similarly, R. Yehuda Leib Graubart [20] explains that *chazal* [21] praise a king who would read *parshas hamelech* standing even though technically he may do so sitting because he, being the king, was the only person who was relevant to the *din* of *parshas hamelech*. As such, *yuhara* was irrelevant as there was no one else that he was showing his superiority to, and thus *kol hapatur min hadavar v'oseihu nikra hedyot* does not apply.

Elsewhere, the *Chida* [22] suggests that *kol hapatur min hadavar v'oseihu nikra hedyot* only applies to *mitzvos bein adam l'makom*; however, the principle is not relevant by *mitzvos bein adam l'chaveiro*. The *Chida* explains that the *mitzvos bein adam l'chaveiro* entail an expectation that one goes beyond one's strict obligation, acting above and beyond the law is precisely what the Torah expects. This, of course, is the only available explanation for the *Chida* who as we have seen believes the issue underlying *kol hapatur min hadavar v'oseihu nikra hedyot* is that one is being *mosif al hatorah*. However, this distinction could also be explained by asserting that *yuhara* is only relevant by issues of *bein adam l'makom* in the first place; however, acting more stringently in areas of *bein adam l'chaveiro* is almost definitionally not going to lead to issues of *yuhara*.

The *Pri Megadim* [23] notes that *kol hapatur min hadavar v'oseihu nikra hedyot* does not apply if someone is abstaining from a specific action as it is not evident to an observer that one is acting stringently. However, the *Pri Chadash* [24] seems to disagree. This dispute as well would seem to depend on whether *kol hapatur min hadavar v'oseihu nikra hedyot* is fundamentally an issue of *yuhara* or of being *mosif al hatorah*.

Yet, there are other views that limit *kol hapatur min hadavar*

v'oseihu nikra hedyot by negating the concern of *mosif al hatorah*.

The *Ramban* [25], for instance, discusses the apparent tension between women electing to perform *mitzvos asei shehazman grama* and *kol hapatur min hadavar v'oseihu nikra hedyot*. He explains that *kol hapatur min hadavar v'oseihu nikra hedyot* only applies in contexts where one is electing to do something which is not a *mitzvah* at all. However, if it is a *mitzvah* for some people then another person who happens to be exempt may elect to perform the *mitzvah* themselves. As such, women may perform *mitzvas asei shehazman grama*.

It would have been possible to explain that *mosif al hatorah* is only applicable if no one is commanded in that *mitzvah* and therefore one is introducing a completely new practice. However, the *Ritva's* [26] explanation of the *Ramban's* view would seem to point to a different rationale. The *Ritva* prefaces that the most optimal act is something that one is commanded to do by *Hashem*. Moreover, the *Ritva* understands that if *Hashem* commanded a *mitzvah* to others, then even if he exempted a specific individual it demonstrates that it is *Hashem's* will for people, even those who are not obligated to do so, to perform this *mitzvah* and therefore they receive a reward for doing so. However, one violates *kol hapatur min hadavar v'oseihu nikra hedyot* if they do something which no one is commanded to do. It would therefore seem that the *Ritva* does not understand that *kol hapatur min hadavar v'oseihu nikra hedyot* means that one is doing something bad but rather that one is doing something worthless. As such, the determining factor of whether *kol hapatur min hadavar v'oseihu nikra hedyot* applies would be whether one would receive merit for performing this act.

The *Chida* [27] notes an apparent contradiction between the *Ramban's* limitation of *kol hapatur min hadavar v'oseihu nikra hedyot* which states that it only applies if one is doing something that is not a *mitzvah* for anyone and R. Shlomo Luria's [28] assertion that *kol hapatur min hadavar v'oseihu nikra hedyot* dictates that one should not perform *reishis hagaz* in *chutz l'aretz*. At first glance, this seems to be in contradiction with the *Ramban* as the *mitzvah* of *reishis hagaz* applies to those who are in *Eretz Yisroel*. The *Chida*, therefore, to defend R. Shlomo Luria contends that the *Ramban*

meant *kol hapatur min hadavar v'oseihu nikra hedyot* does not apply to one who has a blanket exemption to a certain pre-existing *din*. However, if one is generally obligated but given the specific circumstances, they are exempt then *kol hapatur min hadavar v'oseihu nikra hedyot* still applies. However, it should be noted, that it is not immediately clear why this distinction should exist given the various rationales for *kol hapatur min hadavar v'oseihu nikra hedyot* that have thus far been discussed.

The Vilna Gaon [29] understands that the problem of *kol hapatur min hadavar v'oseihu nikra hedyot* only applies when one elects to do something which is not a *mitzvah* at all (e.g. sitting in the *sukkah* while it rains). However, if something is fundamentally a *mitzvah* but *halacha* did not burden someone to do it then it is not problematic to be stringent. At first glance, the Vilna Gaon's contention seems to contradict the *Yerushalmi*. After all, not needing to interrupt one's meal to *daven* would seem to be a prime example of something fundamentally being a *mitzvah* but so as not to burden the person they are exempt. However, the Vilna Gaon reads the *Yerushalmi* as concluding that *kol hapatur min hadavar v'oseihu nikra hedyot* was incorrectly applied to that case.

The *Chida* [30] suggests that *kol hapatur min hadavar v'oseihu nikra hedyot* only applies when the accepted *halachic* view would contend that there is no positive benefit to the non-obligatory act. However, if even according to the accepted view there is a positive benefit, just they maintain that one is not obligated to do it then there is no problem of *kol hapatur min hadavar v'oseihu nikra hedyot*. He, therefore, resolves an apparent contradiction between a *zakein* being exempt from returning lost objects but being able to do so anyway if he so wishes and the principle of *kol hapatur min hadavar v'oseihu nikra hedyot*. Even though it is technically forbidden for a *zakein* to return lost objects it is still an inherently positive activity.

The *Meiri* [31] seems to offer three qualifications on *kol hapatur min hadavar v'oseihu nikra hedyot*. Firstly, he states that it only applies if all similar things are permitted, seemingly conveying that adding *gedarim* (procedures to ensure one does not come to violate a prohibition) is not an issue. Second, he explains that if as an out-

come of this practice, one will see improvements in the refinement of character or the like then it is permitted. Lastly, he implies that the *kol hapatur min hadavar v'oseihu nikra hedyot* is only an issue when one treats a non-obligatory practice like a *mitzvah*. Similarly, the *Pri Megadim* [32] insists that if there is any *safek* or need then *kol hapatur min hadavar v'oseihu nikra hedyot* is not applied. The *Be'er Sheva* [33] likewise suggests that *kol hapatur min hadavar v'oseihu nikra hedyot* does not apply if one is setting up boundaries so as to not come to violate prohibitions.

In a slightly different vein, the *Sefer Haterumah* [34] suggests that *kol hapatur min hadavar v'oseihu nikra hedyot* is confined to circumstances where one is acting *l'sheim chumra*. This can perhaps best be ascertained with the following test. Was one to internalize that there is absolutely no *halachic* benefit would they still act in this manner? If they would then there is no issue with doing the non-obligatory act according to the *Sefer Haterumah*. The *Be'er Sheva* [35] utilizes this principle to explain why it was permitted for women to be careful to utilize a certain type of *shabbos* candle even though the accepted *halachic* view is that other types may be used as well. He explains that the women are not choosing this candle due to *halachic* considerations but rather because they enjoy the aesthetics of the candles. Furthermore, the *Shvus Yaakov* [36] argues along similar lines that one may put a *mezuzah* on a house that is formally exempt (e.g. one that he owns jointly with a non-Jew) because he is doing so in order to receive the *shmira* (protection) that accompanies a *mezuzah* and not because he believes there is a *halachic* benefit.

Importantly, the Vilna Gaon [37] believes that this serves as the basis for the view of the *Rema* [38] that while one need not do *sirtut* (etch lines) on every line of *tefillin*, if they want they may do so. The *Rema* believes that *kol hapatur min hadavar v'oseihu nikra hedyot* is only applicable when one is acting due to *halachic* motivations. Thus, the *Rema* permits extra *sirtut* as ostensibly the person is not doing so because they believe it is *halachicly* superior but because it will allow for straighter more beautiful lines. Alternatively, one can suggest that the *Rema* holds that the fundamental issue underlying *kol hapatur min hadavar v'oseihu nikra hedyot* is *yuhara* and that the *Rema* agrees to the *Or Zarua* [39] that adding *sirtut*

does not raise an issue of *yuhara*.

The distinction the Vilna Gaon made within the *Rema* is also mentioned by the *Beis Yosef* [40] in the context of the *Tur's* [41] view that one may add additional *sirtut*. This leads the *Magen Avrohom* [42] to believe that the *mechaber* (who also authored the *Beis Yosef*) personally agrees to this distinction. However, R. Akiva Eiger [43] points out that if one can write straight un-assisted then the *mechaber* would maintain that even if one's intent is not due to *halachic* considerations it would still be problematic to add *sirtut*. Yet, if one is not able to write neatly without *sirtut* then it becomes an obligation to add *sirtut* and thus even according to the *mechaber* there is no issue of *kol hapatur min hadavar v'oseihu nikra hedyot*. Thus, according to R. Akiva Eiger the *Mechaber* and *Rema* dispute whether lack of intent *l'sheim chumra* is a valid limitation of *kol hapatur min hadavar v'oseihu nikra hedyot*.

However, upon consideration, the *Mechaber's* view, as well as that of some others, raises a startling issue. Why is it not problematic to always wear a certain shirt that one finds comfortable? As R. Akiva Eiger explained, the suggestion that it is permitted because one is not motivated by *halachic* considerations is not available to the *Mechaber*. Furthermore, the *Meiri's* qualification that *kol hapatur min hadavar v'oseihu nikra hedyot* only applies when one treats the non-obligatory activity the same way he does a *mitzvah* would seemingly not be sufficient. Presumably, one who is adding extra *sirtut* to improve the aesthetics would not treat it with the same seriousness as the *sirtut* which is mandated by the basic *halacha*. The author has not seen anyone address this issue. However, it may be suggested that *kol hapatur min hadavar v'oseihu nikra hedyot* only applies to non-obligatory actions that have parallel obligatory actions (e.g. adding extra *sirtut*, sitting in the *sukkah* while it is raining, or interrupting a meal to *daven*). However, if an action is not only non-obligatory but has no parallel obligatory action then it does not even enter the category of activities to which *kol hapatur min hadavar v'oseihu nikra hedyot* is applied.

The *Olas Shmuel* [44] limits the principle of *kol hapatur min hadavar v'oseihu nikra hedyot* to scenarios wherein one being stringent will lead to them violating a prohibition. One is violating *kol*

hapatur min hadavar v'oseihu nikra hedyot if they remain in the *sukkah* while it is raining as this causes them to desecrate *yom tov*. On the other hand, it would be acceptable for one to be careful to drink water in the *sukkah* as this will not lead one to violate a prohibition. It should be noted that while it is theoretically possible that the *Rema* would embrace such a distinction the *mechaber* most certainly does not as the *mechaber* invokes the rule of *kol hapatur min hadavar v'oseihu nikra hedyot* regarding adding more *sirtut* than needed which surely will not lead one to violate a prohibition. Indeed, the *Be'er Sheva* [45] explicitly disagrees with the *Olas Shmuel's* limitation.

The *Be'er Sheva* [46] entertains the possibility that *kol hapatur min hadavar v'oseihu nikra hedyot* is an all-encompassing principle. Indeed, he suggests, the statements of *chazal* which praise being stringent may just mean that one should not always do everything that is *muttar*. Yet, at the same time one should not always treat something which is permitted as if it were forbidden. However, the *Be'er Sheva* is ultimately unsatisfied with this approach and ends his comments by noting that the matter requires further investigation.

R. Yaakov Etlinger [47] suggests that *kol hapatur min hadavar v'oseihu nikra hedyot* does not apply if one is currently exempt but by being stringent they will be putting themselves in a situation where they are fulfilling a *mitzvah*. Thus, for example, one who is exempt from *mitzvas sukkah* because the rain stopped in the middle of the night may be stringent upon themselves to go to the *sukkah* because by doing so, they will be fulfilling a *mitzvah*.

In a fascinating twist, R. Yissocher Shlomo Teichtal [48], in an attempt to defend *chasideshe rebbes* who would sit in the *sukkah* even during the rain, argues that *kol hapatur min hadavar v'oseihu nikra hedyot* is a positive. To be a *hedyot* in the context of *avodas Hashem* is something one should aspire to as it shows that one recognizes their relative insignificance when compared to *Hashem*. Needless to say, this very creative approach is directly contradicted by essentially every application of *kol hapatur min hadavar v'oseihu nikra hedyot* from the *Yerushalmi* through the *poskim*. One could possibly defend these *rebbes* by asserting that they maintained that the issue of *kol hapatur min hadavar v'oseihu nikra hedyot* is one of *yuhara*,

however. Therefore, as the *Ravya* [49] explains, there is no issue for one who is *hurgal b'prishus*, like a *rebbe*, to be *machmir*.

[1] *Orach Chaim* 472:5

[2] 472:6

[3] 472:10

[4] *Yevamos* 20a

[5] *Berachos* 2:9, *Shabbos* 1:2

[6] *Mishna Shabbos* 1:2

[7] *Shut Shvus Yaakov* Vol.2 30, See *Shut Shvus Yaakov* Vol. 2 44 where he accepts the concept of *kol hapatur min hadavar v'oseihu nikra hedyot*, see also *Chok Yaakov* 472:10 where he likewise accepts the principle.

[8] See, for example, *Orach Chaim* 32:6 and 639:7 (and *nosei keilim* there).

[9] *Mordechai Brachos* 1 (3a), *Ravya* 597 *Meir Panim Brachos* 2:9, *Chasidim* on *Yerushalmi* 2:9, and others

[10] *Ramban Kiddushin* 31a, *Terumas Hadeshen* 101 quoting *Maharam Mirutenberg*

[11] *Ksav Sofer Gittin* 6b

[12] *Pri Megadim Eishel Avrohom* 32:8

[13] See, for example, *Mordechai Brachos* 1 (3a)

[14] However, this would seem to only be the case within the first variation of *mosif al hatorah* which is that it is inherently problematic to act in ways that are not found within the Torah as the other view is certainly to be found within the Torah as well. However, the second permutation may seem to not be in line with the *Pri Megadim*. Perhaps since one is being careful to act in a specific manner even though they are not obligated to do so they may be revealing that in general they are acting in accordance with *Halacha* only because they like to do so and not because they are commanded to do so. On the other hand, it may be argued that the *Pri Megadim* may fit with this second permutation if one assumes (in a similar fashion to a principle of the *Ritva* discussed later) that there is a material difference between being concerned for a minority opinion where one's actions are presumably done due to a desire to act in accordance with *ratzon Hashem* as opposed to one being careful to act in a manner that no one believes is obligatory in which case it becomes clear that in general, he observes *halacha* because he likes to do so and not because of a desire to operate in accordance with *ratzon Hashem*.

- [15] *Mordechai Brachos* 1 (3a), *Ravya* 597 [footnotes to *mahaduras diblitski* note that it is unclear if this is the last piece of *Meggila* or the first to *Sukkah*]
- [16] *Sdei Chemed* 20:16:11
- [17] *Ravya* 597
- [18] *Shut Shvus Yaakov* Vol. 2 44
- [19] *Birkei Yosef Orach Chaim* 32:2
- [20] *Chavilim B'niemim* 1:9:11
- [21] *Sotah* 41a
- [22] *Pesach Einayim Bava Metzia* 82
- [23] *Hakdama to Orach Chaim* 2:5
- [24] *Orach Chaim* 417:1
- [25] *Ramban Kiddushin* 31a
- [26] *Ritva Kiddushin* 31a
- [27] *Birkei Yosef Yoreh Deah* 333
- [28] *Yam Shel Shlomo Chullin* 11a
- [29] *Shnos Eliyahu Brachos* 10b
- [30] *Pesach Einayim Bava Metzia* 82
- [31] *Meiri Bava Kama* 71a
- [32] *Pri Megadim Eishel Avrohom* 32:8
- [33] *Shut Be'er Sheva* 21
- [34] *Sefer Haterumah* 196
- [35] *Shut Be'er Sheva* 21
- [36] *Shvus Yaakov* Vol. 3 89, c.f. *Beis Aryeh Yoreh Deah* 291:20
- [37] *Biur Hagra Orach Chaim* 32:6 s.v. *ein*
- [38] *Orach Chaim* 32:6
- [39] *Or Zarua* Vol. 1 543
- [40] *Beis Yosef Orach Chaim* 32:10
- [41] *Tur Orach Chaim* 32:6
- [42] *Magen Avrohom* 32:8
- [43] *Haghas R' Akiva Eiger* 32 s.v. *v'lo*
- [44] Quoted by *biur halacha* 32 s.v. *v'kol*
- [45] *Shut Be'er Sheva* 21
- [46] *Shut Be'er Sheva* 21
- [47] *Bikurei Yaakov* 639:38, quoted by *biur halacha* 639 s.v. *hedyotos*
- [48] *Shut Mishna Sachir* Vol. 1 119
- [49] *Mordechai Brachos* 1 (3a), *Ravya* 597

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