

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **What Are We to Appreciate at the Seder?**

*Rabbi Michael Taubes, Rosh HaFeshirah*

Towards the end of the *Maggid* section of the *Haggadah*, we read about a disagreement among the *Tannaim* as to precisely how many *Makkos* the Egyptians suffered both in Egypt proper, prior to the night of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, and then a week later at the time of *Keryias Yam Suf*. The dispute centers around an analysis of the implication of certain *pesukim* and may be found in a number of *Midrashim*, including *Shemos Rabbah* (23:9). Interestingly, the Rambam, in his presentation of the text of the *Haggadah* (printed at the end of his *Hilchos Chametz U'Matzah*), does not include this passage, or that which follows it, the poetic list of fifteen wonderful things that *Hashem* did for us from the time He took us out of Egypt until the *Beis HaMikdash* was built, each line of which concludes with the familiar word “*Dayeinu*.”

To explain this omission, Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik suggested that the Rambam holds that while the ideas expressed in these sections, namely, the extent of the punishments cast upon the Egyptians and the descriptions of so many great things done by *Hashem* on our behalf, are certainly important and noteworthy, they are not part of the *Seder* service on *Pesach* night. The emphasis on that evening is meant to be solely upon what *Hashem* did for us in Egypt as part of the actual exodus on that same date, the fifteenth of *Nissan*, those many years ago. That which He did for us subsequently, such as at *Yam Suf* (and beyond), can be acknowledged and thanked for some other time, but not at the *Seder*.

As proof for this idea, Rav Soloveitchik noted that that when articulating the *mitzvah* on *Pesach* to retell the story of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, the Rambam (*Hilchos Chametz U'Matzah* 7:1) states that it is a requirement from the *Torah* to tell of the miracles and wonders which were done for our ancestors in Egypt “on the night of the fifteenth of *Nissan*.” That last phrase, the Rav posited, teaches us not when the requirement of *Sipur Yetzias Mitzrayim* is in force, as more commonly understood, but which miracles and wonders that requirement mandates us to recount – specifically, those which were done on the night of the fifteenth of *Nissan*, or leading up to it, and not those that took place after that.

It may be added that this same question as to whether the miracles performed at *Yam Suf* are technically considered part of the *Yetzias Mitzrayim* epoch or not seems to apply to a related *mitzvah* as well, the daily (and nightly) *mitzvah* of *Zechiras Yetzias Mitzrayim*. This *mitzvah* obligates us not to fully tell over the story of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, as is required on *Pesach* night, but rather to recall it and mention it in brief.

The *Magen Avraham* (*Orach Chaim* 67:1, at the end) rules that to fulfill this *mitzvah*, one may recite the *Shiras HaYam* (known as “*Az Yashir*”) sung by the people following *Keriyas Yam Suf*, and that alone suffices; he apparently holds that at least for the purpose of this *mitzvah*, what transpired at *Yam Suf* is indeed an integral part of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*. Rabbi Akiva Eiger, however, in his commentary there, quotes from the *Chasam Sofer* that for this requirement as well one must mention at least something about the day of the actual *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, the fifteenth of *Nissan*, and not (only) something about *Keriyas Yam Suf*, which happened later.

The question, however, in light of this discussion, is why most standard versions of the *Haggadah* which we all use do in fact include the debate about what happened to the Egyptians at *Yam Suf* as well as the list of the great things that *Hashem* did for us in “*Dayeinu*,” many of which took place even quite some time later. Perhaps it can be suggested that in a certain sense, *Hashem* really “had” to take our ancestors out of Egypt. After all, He had promised Avraham *Avinu* as part of the *Bris Bein HaBesarim* that although his descendants would be enslaved and oppressed for many years in a foreign land, eventually they would be taken out of there and would leave with great wealth (see *Bereishis* 15:13-14). *Hashem* therefore had no choice but to keep His word and redeem our ancestors whether He really wanted to do so or not; the *pesukim* in *Yechezkel* (20:1-10) make it clear that if not for that commitment, *Hashem* was ready to destroy the Jewish people in Egypt! For this reason, when we refer to the *Bris Bein HaBesarim* in the *Haggadah*, we praise *Hashem* for indeed keeping His promise (“*Baruch shomer havtachaso...*). Clearly, though, celebrating the *Pesach Seder* by acknowledging merely that *Hashem* kept His word by redeeming our people would ring somewhat hollow, and we would like to believe that much more was going on here. Based on other *pesukim* in *Yechezkel* (16:6-8), *Chazal* understood that *Hashem* acted as well out of His love for our *Avos* and thus provided our ancestors with *mitzvos* in Egypt – as opportunities to achieve the merits that would make them, too, worthy of His love (see Rashi to *Shemos* 12:6, citing the *Mechilta* there). So while *Hashem* was definitely in some ways “required” to free the Jewish people, He ultimately did so out of His love for them as well. By incorporating into our *Haggadah* some of the wondrous things that *Hashem* performed on our behalf after *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, concerning which there was no binding obligation and which hence were done purely because of His love for us, we are reminded that even that which He did in redeeming them on the fifteenth of *Nissan* itself was likewise done not only out of obligation, but also out of love, and that is certainly something to ponder and appreciate at the *Seder*.

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**KADDESH****Brachah Achronah on the First of the Four Cups***Ponah Jasse (22)*

The *Seder* is one of the biggest highlights of *Pesach*. It is compact with words of *Torah* and food. Although a plethora of *divrei Torah* are typically shared during *Maggid*, during which we recount the story of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, there is of course an abundance of *Torah* in all the other steps in the *Seder*. One step which I will focus on takes place at the very beginning: *Kadeish*. *Kadeish* contains the first of the four cups of wine that we drink at the *Seder*, and it is the first step of the whole *Haggadah*. One question that some *Poskim* and *Achronim* ponder is whether one must recite a *brachah achronah* just after the consumption of this cup, as maybe all of *Maggid* is a *hefsek*, and therefore you can't be *yotzei* your *brachah achronah* for this cup when you *bentch* during *Barech*.

The *Mishnah Berurah* states that one does not make a *brachah achronah* after this cup, as they are *yotzei* through *benching* at the end of the meal, since the *Haggadah* is not a *hefsek* (a *halachic* disconnection) from this first cup. However, a further concern is whether nowadays, with all the additions we make of *divrei Torah* and other things, is it possible that *Maggid* has become a *hefsek*? Rav Asher Weiss, in his *sefer* called *Minchas Asher*, suggests that this is not the case. He proves this from the Maharach Or Zarua, who did not do *brachah achronah* after the cup despite having a greatly extended *Seder*. Furthermore, the Shulchan Aruch Harav suggests that even if one surpassed the time of digestion, there is still no issue, and one need not do a *brachah achronah*.

Be this as it may, another issue emerges: should one make a *Birchas Hamazon* (like we do at the *Seder*) on a *Birchas Hamitzvah*. Rav Asher Weiss brings a Maharam in *Yuma* that suggests that one only does *Birchas Hamazon* on things one gets benefits from, however, *Matzah* and *Kiddush* are really only done for the sake of the *Mitzvah*. Nonetheless, Rav Asher suggests that despite these being *Birchos Hamitzvah*, these still provide *hana'ah* to a person's body. Therefore, just as we do a *Birchas Hamazon* by a meal for *hana'ah*, even more so we should *bentch* by a meal that is both for *hana'ah* and a *Mitzvah*.

**LEANING****Safeik Deraban Lechumra??***Ezra Schechter (22)*

The *Gemara* in the tenth *perek* of *Pesachim* discusses the *seder* and the rules regarding it. While discussing the rules of leaning, the *Gemara* says that we lean for *Matzos* but not for *marror* and then explains an interesting *machlokes* about leaning for the four cups of wine. The *Gemara* ex-

plains that seemingly Rav Nachman says that we lean for wine but another time Rav Nachman says we don't lean for wine. The *Gemara* answers this *stira* for Rav Nachman by saying that he was talking about only two of the cups for one of the statements and the other two cups for the other statement. The question is which pair was each statement referring to?

We either say that the first two cups require leaning because leaning symbolizes freedom and our exodus of *Mitzrayim* is the start of our freedom and we drink the first two cups while telling that part of our story. Alternatively, we can say that the first two cups do not need leaning because we were still slaves at that time and the second two cups do need leaning because they are drunk once we were free. The *Gemara* does not know which two need leaning and which two don't so the *Gemara* answers that they all need leaning. The question on this is why? We have a concept *Safeik Derabanan Likulah*, which means that when we are unsure about what to do for a *Halacha* which is *Derabanan* we take the lenient approach- so in this case we seem to ignore this rule and take the stringent route and lean for all four?

The Ran answers this question with two famous answers. The first is that *Safeik Derabanan Likulah* only applies in cases where it is more of a *Tiercha* (extra, unnecessary effort) and a bigger deal if we were to go according to the *chumrah* opinion. In this case it is really not a big deal to just lean while drinking and therefore it does not follow under *Safeik Derabanan Likulah*. The Ran's second answer is also that this case is an exception to *Safeik Derabanan Likulah* because this case is an intuitive case where if we go with the leniency then the whole thing wouldn't exist because being lenient would be not leaning at all. Therefore, we see that *Safeik Derabanan Likulah* doesn't apply in cases that would fully take away the *mitzvah*.

We see from this Ran that the simple rule of *Safeik derabanan likulah* has exceptions. Another exception is that you wouldn't apply a *safeik derabanan likulah* in a case where you just lack knowledge and don't know what to do. It has to be an actual case where you investigated and tried to figure out all the information. It's also not an *petur* from doing the *mitzvah*- it is a *bidieved* last resort. Another example is with *Chomer Shabbos*. *Chomer Shabbos* is when a *Derabanan* is instituted to make *Shabbos* more *kadosh*. An example is that it's *assur* for a Jew to enjoy anything that was done from *Melachah* on *Shabbos* from a Non-Jew. A Jew is allowed to benefit from light turned on by a non-Jew if the non-Jew turned it on for a group of people who are primarily non Jewish. If we do not know the plurality of the people, and it's a *safeik* if the majority was non Jewish or not, then we would be *Machmir* and the Jew cannot enjoy the effects of the *Melachah* even though this is a *derabanan* and we should go *likulah*. One last exception to *Safeik Derabanan Likulah* is a *davar Shey-*

*ish lo matirin*. This is a case where something is *assur* now but will become *mutar* with time. We are not lenient in a case where there is a *safeik* of something that's *assur* now but will be *mutar* later. An example of this is when we have a *safeik* if an egg was laid during *Chol HaMoed* or before we are *machmir* and assume it was laid during *Chol HaMoed* and can't be used since it will be able to be used later.

With these exceptions we see the reason why we have to lean for all four cups even though the opinion to lean is only for two.

### 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 *yot-*

zei 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 stand-

ing (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 Deeper Meaning to Karpas

*Moshe Lieberman (24)*

At the *Pesach* seder, we dip twice: first *karpas* in salt water and later *maror* in *charoset*. What is the significance of the first dipping early in the *seder*? The *Gemara* (*Pesachim* 114b) says that it is *heker letinokos*; it is supposed to arouse the children to ask questions. Yet it raises questions for adults, as well. If this is the only reason, why do we need a vegetable? We could use a fruit or some other food for that reason. It seems from the *Gemara* that *karpas* must be a vegetable so that a single blessing of *borei peri adama* can be recited for both the *karpas* and the later *maror*.

Is there a deeper connection between the *maror* and the *karpas* than just the blessing? Additionally, is it significant what type of vegetable we choose for *karpas*? *Askenazim* use a potato or radish while *Sephardim* use parsley or another green vegetable. Is this choice of vegetable meaningful?

The *gemara* explains how to manage the two blessings of *borei*

*peri adama* and *al achilas maror* if you only have *maror* at the table after addressing whether *mitzvos* require intention. According to Rav Huna, you recite *borei peri adama* first and *al achilas maror* later in the *seder* when you receive your second piece of *maror*. According to Rav Chisda, you recite both blessings at the beginning and then don't recite any blessings until it's time to eat the *maror*. The *gemara* (115a) concludes that we should adopt Rav Chisda's opinion. The *gemara* ends the discussion with the deeds of Rav Acha the son of Rava, who sought other vegetables in order to remove himself from the dispute.

This *gemara* seems to be discussing a strange case. Why are there no other vegetables available? People only have *maror* in their homes?! There are many other vegetables available during this time of year! It seems odd that the *gemara* tells the story that Rav Acha the son of Rava searched for other vegetables; where was he living that vegetables were so scarce?

It seems that during the times of the *Beis Hamikdash*, there were two dippings. One dipping of *maror* was before the meal and a second dipping of *maror* occurred when the *pesach*, *matzah* and *maror* were eaten together. *Maror* functions in two ways: by itself it is bitter and with meat and other foods like fish, it adds flavor. So, the first, bitter, *maror* was to remember the servitude. They remembered the bitterness by eating *maror*, as well as the splitting of the *matzah*, which both symbolize the servitude, at the beginning of the *seder*. They were essential props to get the children to ask about the change from normal eating habits. This is the *heker letinokos*. **When we reach the climax of the *seder*, the *maror* is part of the enhancement, the *geulah*, (redemption). In life, when we struggle with difficulties, it is bitter. Only afterwards do we in some way realize its importance, which can make us stronger. That is the function of “*matzos al merorim yochluhu* (Shemos 12:8), eating *pesach*, *matzah* and *maror* together. As a nation, we are stronger because of the bitterness and slavery we experienced in Egypt.**

However, with the destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash*, *maror* is only a rabbinic obligation. Since we are back in exile, the *maror* is eaten separately again, no longer as a sandwich with *pesach* and *matzah*. We are re-experiencing the bitterness of exile. Therefore, we eat *maror* right before the sandwich to contrast our bitterness and what was done at the time of the temple. If we have this dipping, do we need a first? Most of the Sages wanted to change the practice to avoid the repetition. In response, they instituted what we call *karpas*. (See *Yerushalmi Pesachim* 10:3)

What does *karpas* mean? Rashi, in *Parshas Vayeshev* (37:3), states concerning Yosef's multi-colored coat, that it was a cloak of fine wool like the draperies of Achashverosh, which was called *karpas*.

*Karpas* alludes to Yosef's cloak, which was dipped in blood and sent to Yaakov (37:31-32). This action, which was the beginning of the exile, occurred because of *sinas chinam*, baseless hatred. The Sages understood that the destruction of the second *Beis Hamikdash* was because of *sinas chinam* (Yoma 9b). We only need maror once not twice. The *karpas* dipping is to explain why we returned to exile. The *gemara* is dealing with the fact that even with the exile it took a few hundred years for *Klal Yisrael* to uniformly give up only having maror as the vegetable. Rav Acha and others pushed to have another vegetable at the table.

Perhaps, this is why different communities used specific vegetables for *karpas*. *Karpas* does not stand on its own but is still linked to *maror*. Even though the Sages changed the practice, they wanted some aspects of the connection to remain. Therefore, *karpas* should look like *maror*. In *Ashkenazic* communities, where *maror* was white horseradish, they ate potatoes or radishes. In communities where they used green romaine lettuce for *maror*, they would use parsley or some other green vegetable for *karpas*.

According to this reasoning, we should not lean when eating *karpas* because it is in place of *maror* and the bitterness of exile. It is not merely convenient that the same blessing is said on both *karpas* and *maror*. It forces you to have in mind *maror* when reciting the *borei pri adamah* blessing on *karpas*. In the future, when the *Beis Hamikdash* is rebuilt, we will return to a *seder* of *kulo maror*, only *maror*, without *karpas*.

### HA LACHMA ANYA

#### A Peculiar Placement: The Late Invitation of Ha Lachma Anya

*Meir Morell ('22)*

*Pesach* is often considered to be the *Yom Tov* of *mesorah*, the holiday of tradition, as the *passuk* relates "And you shall explain to your child on that day, 'It is because of what God did for me when I went free from Egypt.'" (Shemos 13:8) Because of this, I continue to be compelled to write *Divrei Torah* for *Pesach* which focus on words I've heard or read from my father and grandfather. Baruch Hashem, I have a relatively large collection of notes written by my grandfather z"l on the *Haggadah* and have the *zechus* to use them below.

My grandfather, Rabbi Dr. Shmuel Morell z"l, quoted Abudraham explaining the background of "*Ha Lachma Anya*":

"כתב רב מתתיה מה שנהגו לומר כל דכפין ייתי ויכול כך היה מנהג אבות שהיו מגביהין שולחנותיהם ולא היו סוגרין דלתותיהם והיו אומרים ככה כדי שיבאו ישראל העניים שביניהם לאכול ולקבל שכר היו עושין זה ועכשיו שנעשו שכיני עכו"ם יותר משכיני ישראל מפרנסין אותם בתחלה כדי שלא יחזרו על הפתחים ואח"כ מגביהין את השולחן ואו' כמנהג ראשונים." (אבודרהם)

Abudraham explains in the name of Rav Matisyah that the *minhag* to say “*kol dichfin yeisei v’yeichol*” was the *minhag* of our forefathers. They would lift their tables and they wouldn’t close their doors and they would say this [“*kol dichfin...*”] so Jewish paupers who lived near them would come to eat. My grandfather then asked

ולמה לא לפני קידוש? (ואין לי תשובה)

He asked why we don’t say “*Ha Lachma Anya*” before *kiddush* instead of before *maggid* when everyone is already seated. In his humble fashion, he noted that he didn’t have an answer. Let’s see a few possible answers. Ra’avan explained that the invitation is not directed to the needy, but rather to the members of the household, who are now encouraged to begin the *Seder* and fulfill the *mitzvos* of the night.

The *Chasam Sofer* explained that “*Ha Lachma Anya*” is not an invitation, but a proclamation. Some people believe that it is preferable to serve *Hashem* in solitude, but we proclaim that the ideal form of service is in the company of other people. Therefore, we invite others to come and join us in performing the *mitzvos* of the *Seder*.

The *Divrei Yoel* explained that “*Ha Lachma Anya*” is not an invitation to paupers, but a prayer that the *kedudshah* of the *Seder* prompts *Hashem* to shower goodness on all of the Jewish people.

The *Minchas Asher* explained that in ancient times, “*Ha Lachma Anya*” was said as an invitation to the needy during the day, before the *korban Pesach* was slaughtered. This was well before the *Seder* had started, when paupers were looking for a place to eat and it was still possible to invite them. This makes a lot of sense as we say “*yeisei v’yifsach*” “sit and partake in the *korban Pesach*.” (Otherwise, it would probably be an issue for someone to join a *chaburah* of the *korban Pesach* after it was slaughtered, though a technicality in *Pesachim* 5:3 can probably answer this problem.)

Many of these answers explain why it’s specifically at the beginning of the *seder*, but they still don’t answer why it’s not specifically before *kiddush*. I would personally answer that we specifically wait until the beginning of *maggid* since more people were looking for somewhere to eat earlier on, those who are really desperate and couldn’t find a meal earlier will be given an opportunity to join a *seder* instead of possibly being stuck without a host

### MAASEH B’RABBI ELIEZER

#### The Ultimate Seder

*Mordechai Fox (22)*

In the introductory section of *Maggid*, we read about Rabbi

Eliezer, Rabbi Yehoshua, Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah, Rabbi Akiva, and Rabbi Tarfon, who had their *seder* together in *Bnei Brak*. This *seder* of great *tannaim* lasted until morning, when their *talmidim* came into the room to tell them the time for *Krias Shema Shel Shachris* had arrived.

A number of questions can be raised about this story. The *Gemara* in *Sanhedrin* (32b) tells us that Rabbi Akiva had a *Yeshivah* in *Bnei Brak*, while Rabbi Eliezer lived in *Lod* and Rabbi Yehoshua lived in *Pe-kiin*. This suggests that the *Tannaim* must have been having their *Seder* at the home of Rabbi Akiva. Why did these great *Tannaim* gather in *Bnei Brak* of all places? What was special about Rabbi Akiva that caused them to congregate in his house? This question is exacerbated in light of the *Avos D'Rabbi Nosson* (6) which discusses the origins of Rabbi Akiva and explains that Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Yehoshua were his *Rebbeim*. Why, then, would they come to eat at Rabbi Akiva's home instead of Rabbi Akiva traveling to one of their homes? Additionally, why were all of these *Tannaim* having their *Seder* together rather than at home with their families? Is it normal to leave one's home for the *seder*? Furthermore, the *Gemara* in *Sukkos* (27b) tells us that Rabbi Eliezer would praise the "lazy ones" who stay home with their family on the *Chaggim*, based on the *passuk* in *Devarim* which says "וְיִשְׁמְחֶתָּ אִתָּהּ וּבֵיתָךְ" (*Devarim* 14:26). Why, then, would Rabbi Eliezer leave his house to celebrate *Pesach* together with Rabbi Akiva? Doesn't this contradict his own opinion? What is the purpose behind this great *Seder*?

The answer to this question about the *Seder* lies with its host. What was so unique about Rabbi Akiva that caused all of these *Tannaim* to gather by him for the *Seder*? In the *agadata* at the end of *meseches makkos* (24b), the *Gemara* relates a story of Rabbi Akiva and a group of other *Tannaim* as they approached the ruins of the recently destroyed *Beis HaMikdash* in *Yerushalayim*. They encountered a group of foxes walking among the ruins, and all of the group except for Rabbi Akiva began to cry. Rabbi Akiva, on the other hand, was laughing at this sight. Dismayed at his reaction, the rest of the group asked Rabbi Akiva how he could be laughing? They were standing in front of the ruins of the most famous *kadosh* place on Earth! How could he be laughing at such a time as this when foxes were trodding upon the place about which was written "וְהָזָר הִקְרַב יוֹמָתָ" (*Bamidbar* 1:51)? Rabbi Akiva responded with a great insight that reveals much about his character. Instead of lamenting the destruction, Rabbi Akiva looked at the situation from a different angle. Rabbi Akiva told them that the *Nevuos* of Uriah and Zechariah were connected based on a *passuk* in *Yeshayahu* (8:2). In *Sefer Michah* (3:12), Uriah foretold the destruction of the *Beis HaMikdash*, while the prophecy of Zechariah spoke of a time when "עוֹד יִשְׁבוּ זִקְנִים וּזְקֻנֹת בְּרַחוּבוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַיִם" (*Zechariah* 8:4). Now that the *Nevuah* of Uriah came about, the *Nevuah*

of Zechariah was bound to come true as well. Once again, *Hashem* would bring about *Geulah* and the streets of *Yerushalayim* would be filled with precious old people. Instead of focusing on the current destruction, Rabbi Akiva turned his eyes towards the future *Geulah* when the *Beis HaMikdash* will stand again. Unlike the rest of the *Tannaim*, Rabbi Akiva was able to focus on the positive aspect of the situation, remaining optimistic even in the face of total desecration and destruction. Furthermore, the *Mishnah* in *Pesachim* (10:6) relates a disagreement between Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Tarfon as to how to end the *Brachah* of *Geulah* we say at the *Seder* night after the *hallel* section of *Maggid*. Rabbi Tarfon ended the *Bracha* with “אָלְנוּ וְנֶאֱמַר אֶת אַבְרָהָם מִמְצָרַיִם,” remembering the past *Geulah* from *Mitzrayim*. However, Rabbi Akiva would add “נִיְעָנֵנוּ לְמוֹעֲדִים” וְלִרְגָלִים אֲחֵרִים הַבָּאִים לְקִרְאָתֵנוּ לְשָׁלוֹם, שְׂמָחִים בְּבִנְיַן עִירָךְ וְשָׂשִׁים בְּעִבּוּדְךָ, וְנֹאכֵל וְנִשְׂתַּחֲוֶה לְפָנֶיךָ וְנִשְׂתַּחֲוֶה לְפָנֶיךָ וְנִשְׂתַּחֲוֶה לְפָנֶיךָ, וְנִשְׂתַּחֲוֶה לְפָנֶיךָ” connecting the *Geulah* of *Yetzias Mitzrayim* to the future *Geulah*, when we will once again be able to travel to *Yerushalayim* to bring the *Korban Pesach*. Within this *Machlokes*, we see further demonstration of the optimistic nature of Rabbi Akiva and his yearning towards the future *Geulah* of the Jewish people. Rabbi Akiva wanted to include this specifically in the *brachah* of *Geulah* at the *Seder*, where we remember the past *Geulah* from *Mitzrayim*.

It emerges from these two *Gemaras* that Rabbi Akiva was always optimistic and always yearning for future *geulah*. So, on the *Seder* night where we focus on *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, we can understand why the *Tannaim* would want to gather together with Rabbi Akiva. *Bnei Brak* was, then, a perfect gathering place to tell the story of *Yetzias Mitzrayim* and perhaps to rejoice about the possibility of future *Geulah*. In order to understand this point, the context of this *Seder* is key. Rabbi Akiva and the rest of these *Tannaim* lived during the time of the destruction of the second *Beis HaMikdash*. They knew what it was like to have the *Aliyah L'Regel* and bring the *korban Pesach* themselves. However, the *Beis HaMikdash* was destroyed and now all they had left was to recite the passages of the *Haggadah*. Furthermore, they were living at a time when the Romans were in control of Israel and persecuted the Jews for trying to study the *Torah* and perform the *mitzvos*. Clearly, this was a rather depressing time in the lives of these great *Tannaim*. How could they celebrate *Pesach* without bringing the *korban* or traveling to *Yerushalayim*? They needed to go to Rabbi Akiva. Rabbi Akiva was a great supporter of the Bar Kochba revolts which was an attempt to overthrow the Roman government and reinstitute Jewish sovereignty in Israel. Not only was Rabbi Akiva optimistic about the future Redemption, as was made clear from the *Gemaras* above, but he was working actively towards that goal. Therefore, considering that they were living under the persecution of the Roman government and considering the backdrop of the recent destruc-

tion of the *Beis HaMikdash*, it is so much more clear why these *Tannaim* would gather with Rabbi Akiva. Rabbi Akiva was the only one who could give them the strength to celebrate *Yetzias Mitzrayim* in their circumstances. It was Rabbi Akiva's optimism that allowed them to continue recounting the story of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, the entire night until the morning despite their own personal *Galus*. Sometimes only a little bit of optimism is key. Hopefully at our *Sedarim* this year we can try to channel our inner Rabbi Akiva, and hopefully, we can bring about the future redemption bimhera *biyamenu*.

**BARUCH HAMAKOM**  
**An Unusual Place for a Nickname**

*Aryeh Cochman (25)*

*Baruch HaMakom* is essentially the start of *Maggid* and it is interesting that the main part of *Maggid* does not start with thanking *Hashem* outright, but with a nickname. Keep this in mind, we will return to this very soon.

The *Torah* tells us four different times that we must teach our children about the exodus. In each case, this commandment is worded somewhat differently. The *Torah* is providing the most appropriate responses to four different types of human traits. When one sees something unusual being done he will respond in one of four ways. Some people ask about unusual occurrences in order to learn. These people are always striving to acquire knowledge. Some use it as an opportunity to begin an argument. Where a religious observance is involved, they may see an occasion to express their disbelief. Some are merely curious and want to know what is happening, and if given an adequate reason for a good practice they do the same. However, they may be natural followers, especially when given a good reason. It is because of these different types of people that we are told to repeat the story of leaving Egypt 4 times, one for each type of person.

Now, back to where we started. At the beginning of *Maggid*, *Hashem* is called *Makom*, which means place. In *gematria*, the name *Yud, Hey, Vuv, Hey* compares to *Makom* (מקום) in this way:

10=י

5=ה

6=ו

5=ה

Now, if you square these numbers and add them up you get 186 the same *gematria* as the word *Makom*.

The message I see from this is that while every person is in a different place when they learn about leaving Egypt, they are all in the same

place as well. This means that no matter which of the four personality types you may be, you are still in the same PLACE, and *Hashem* is there with you, because you still have an interest in learning about leaving *Mitzrayim*. Even the person who questions just to argue is gaining knowledge and *Hashem* is in that place with them. Therefore, we call *Hashem* the place, because He is at the place where we come to learn, and when we bless the place we are saying *Baruch Hashem*.

### ***ARBA BANIM***

#### **Including All of the *Arba Banim* on Seder Night**

*Arveh Klein (22) & Avidan Loike (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.

וְהָיָה כִּי־יֹאמְרוּ אֲלֵיכֶם בְּנֵיכֶם מָה הָעֲבֹדָה הַזֹּאת לָכֶם:

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

וְהִגַּדְתָּ לְבִנְךָ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא לֵאמֹר בַּעֲבוּר זֶה עָשָׂה ה' לִי בְצֵאתִי מִמִּצְרָיִם:

*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 בִּנְךָ מָחָר לֵאמֹר מַה־זֹּאת וְאָמַרְתָּ אֵלָיו בְּתוֹק יְד הוֹצִיאָנוּ ה' מִמִּצְרָיִם מִבְּיַת 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־יִשְׁאַלְךָ בִּנְךָ מָחָר לֵאמֹר מָה הַעֲדוֹת וְהַחֻקִּים וְהַמִּשְׁפָּטִים אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ 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 *Midrash 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 *Midrash Tanchuma* are four per-

sonalities 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 *Midrash Tanchuma* notes does not get an answer as a result of their nor having posed a question) is this: no matter how connected or disconnected one is in Judaism, whether they daven three times a day, learn all day, 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 belief. Sometimes we feel like the *chacham*, however, other times we 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, but even so, as the Whatever 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 Chacham

*Yosef Weiner (23)*

In Parshas Vaeschanan (Devarim 6:20-25) the Torah describes the chacham's inquiry:

כי ישאלך בנך מחר לאמר מה העדת והחקים והמשפטים אשר צוה יהוה אלהינו אתכם: **כא** ואמרת לבנך עבדים היינו לפרעה במצרים ויציאנו יהוה ממצרים ביד חזקה: **כב** ויתן יהוה אותם ומפתים גדלים ורעים במצרים בפרעה ובכל ביתו לעינינו: **כג** ואותנו הוציא משם למען הביא אתנו לתת לנו את הארץ אשר נשבע לאבותינו: **כד** ויצונו יהוה לעשות את כל החקים האלה ליראה את יהוה אלהינו לטוב לנו כל הימים לחיתנו כהיום הזה: **כה** וצדקה תהיה לנו כי נשמר לעשות את כל המצוה הזאת לפני יהוה אלהינו כאשר צונו:

*When your son asks you tomorrow, saying, "What are the testimonies and the statutes and the laws that Hashem, our God, commanded you?" You will tell your son, "We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, and Hashem took us out of Egypt with a strong hand. And Hashem set signs and wonders [that were] great and harmful, upon Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon his entire household as we watched. And us He took us out of there, in order to bring us into, and to give us the land He swore to our forefa-*

*thers. Hashem commanded us to perform all these statutes to [show that we] fear Hashem, our God; to benefit us for all time, to keep us alive like this day.*

*And it will be to our credit if we are careful to fulfill this entire mitzvah before Hashem, our God, as He commanded us.*

The Netziv asserts that the *Chacham* is truly asking two questions. What are the *eidus*, *chukim*, and *mishpatim* and what is the purpose of said *mitzvos*? Indeed, the response answers both of these questions. First, the Torah delineates that the father responds that *Hashem* commanded us to do all these statutes, these statutes being the *mitzvos*. Then, the father states “to benefit us for all time...” answering what gain there is to be acquired through doing these *mitzvos*.

While the *Pesukim* only describe the general response of the father, the *Haggadah* describes the specific response of the father. He tells the son the *halachos* of *Pesach* such as not eating after the *afikomen*. However, this only seems to answer the first question of the *chacham*. This does not explain what is the purpose of these laws!

Rav Yoshe Ber Soloveitchik (*Harerei Kedem* Vol. 2 216) explained that this is precisely the point. The response to the *chacham* does not delve into the reasons behind the laws and their practical benefits rather the father learns with the son all of the laws of *Pesach* (Indeed, the Gra has the *girsah* that the father responds regarding the *halachos* of *Pesach* **until** that of not eating after the *afikomen* - the very last one). Through the learning of the laws themselves one will automatically understand the significance of these laws.

Rav Soloveitchik, further, explains that this is in direct parallel to the question of the *Rasha*. The *Rasha* asks what do all of these things mean to you? meaning why are you exerting yourself each year to fulfill all these laws (*Yerushalmi Pesachim* 10:4). Thus, the father and the *chacham* engage in the exhausting pursuit of learning all the *halachos* of *Pesach* demonstrating that only when one exerts himself to learn and fulfill all of the *halachos* and *mitzvos* do they realize that these *mitzvos* are “to benefit us for all time.” Rav Soloveitchik explains that true joy and goodness only emerges from great toil in learning Torah and in fulfilling its laws even down to the minute details. Indeed, this is why the *pesukim* state “like this day” to demonstrate that not only will this pursuit benefit one in the next world but it will bring them joy in this one as well.

Rav Soloveitchik concludes that this demonstrates a fundamental principle of *kiruv*. When one is being *mekarev* another individual it is futile to engage in endless philosophical discussions rather through learning Torah *biyun* and by doing *mitzvos* they will see the light of Torah.

### You Cannot Answer Excuses

*Noam Ben Simon (22)*

Almost anyone with siblings can relate to the following: A full *Pesach* table with family all around, reading the *Haggadah* in turn. After a little while, you reach the four brothers. You got the *Chacham* (obviously, you *are* the smartest after all), and your sister or brother who made the poor choice of sitting next to you has gotten the *Rasha*. A slew of jokes ensue, all in good faith, and then the merriments of the night continue. However, there is a question left to be asked: What did the *Rasha* do? What is the problem with asking about actions we do? Rather, the problem lies less within the question, and more with the framing.

The *Rasha* asks about the services of the day, just like any other brother. However, the obvious difference is in how he uses the terms “you” rather than “I” or “we”. As is pointed out in the passage itself, לַכֶּמֶךְ :”ולא לך” “to you, but not him”. The *Rasha* had a question, and rather than find the answer and learn more before making any decisions, he first acted, separating himself from the Jewish population.

A similar story once happened to a former student of Rav Chaim Soloveitchik, who left the Volozhin Yeshiva after having too many questions about his faith. Years later, this student asked to meet with Rav Chaim and discuss his questions. Rav Chaim agreed, but first asked if the student was challenged with these questions before or after he began defying the rules of *Halacha*. The student responded that it was after, and to this, Rav Chaim stated that the student did not have questions, but rather excuses. The student was not challenged by questions of faith, he was challenged by his inability to keep the *Torah*, and now searched for excuses and ways to rationalize his actions. In the words of Rav Chaim, you can answer questions, you cannot answer excuses.

However, there is a silver lining. As is outlined in the passage of the *Rasha*, we have a fool-proof way of dealing with such people—blunt their teeth! It sounds rather gruesome, but Rav Aron Moss of Chabad offers an insight on this grisly approach to dealing with heretics. Rather than literally blunting his teeth, smooth out his rough edges. The *gematria* value of the word “רשע” is 570, and the value of “צדיק” is 204. Between the two is a difference of 366. Interestingly, the value of “שני” “his teeth”, is 366. Remove the *Rasha*’s teeth, his roughness, and you are left with a *tzaddik*. In Judaism, nothing is irredeemable. The Ben Ish Chai wrote in one of his *Divrei Torah* that “you have no sin that is not rectifiable in the *Torah*”. Nothing that you could do would make you void of repentance. But, at the same time that the *Rasha* has the potential to be redeemed, he is still labeled as a wicked one at that moment. While you should always remember that redemption is never off the table, you should first remind yourself to think before you act.

**YACHOL MEROSH CHODESH****The Jewish Nation**

*Ari Unger (25)*

The *Haggadah* says that it is possible for us to have said that we start *Pesach* on *Rosh Chodesh*. Simple question is why is *Rosh Chodesh Nisan* considered so important that we say you could start *Pesach* then, why should there be any significance attributed to the anniversary of us receiving such a seemingly random *mitzvah*?

The Sefer HaChinuch comments in *Parshat Bo* that *Bnei Yisrael* famously received the *mitzvah* of *Rosh Chodesh* right before they left Egypt. The *mitzvah* of *Rosh Chodesh* showed them when to observe holidays in their proper times. It gave the budding Jewish nation a structure and schedule. History has long shown that every nation establishing itself needs an organization, so it can fully grow into itself, and that is exactly what the Jews received during the Exodus; a structure for their nation, which literally “kept them on schedule”.

It is also important to consider what the Jewish nation is built upon. Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, suggests in his book *Lessons in Leadership*, that the Jewish nation is built upon the education of the next generation. Just as the *mitzvah* of *Rosh Chodesh* is based in *Parashat Bo*, this idea is also based in *Parashat Bo*. Moshe addresses the Elders of the time right before they were going to leave Egypt. Here, Rabbi Sacks brings up the interesting point that instead of focusing on their upcoming freedom, Moshe also chose to speak about teaching the children the story of *Pesach*. At this moment the Jewish people were about to be free people for the first time in 210 years, and yet Moshe declared that the Jews had an obligation to educate future generations. This shows how important education is to the Jewish nation, and how integral a role it plays within our everyday lives.

Education, and the *mitzvah* of *Rosh Chodesh*, are both important parts of our history and story. Without education our tradition would be lost, and without *Rosh Chodesh* we wouldn't be able to maintain our tradition. Judaism would just be a theology with no real physical impression. We would just be another nation lost in history's winding hallways, and only with the teaching of Torah and all of its observances have we managed to continue.

***METICHILA*****Doing What is Asked of Us***Avidan Loike (22)*

On the most basic level we ask why were the Egyptians punished? The obvious answer would seem to be that they were evil and enslaved us, and as such Hashem punished them. While this answer seems to suffice, in the portion of the *Hagadah* which begins with *mitichilah ovdei avodah zarah* we introduce the notion that Avraham's descendants were destined, by virtue of a preconceived plan, to be enslaved in Egypt. This leads to the following query: weren't the Egyptians just doing what Hashem wanted them to do, so why are they now being punished? Furthermore, the Chasam Sofer explains that when Hashem says "I will judge them" it refers not only to *Mitzrayim*, but to anyone who harms *Klal Yisrael*. As such, why is it that any nation which harms us is punished if, after all, their harming us is the *Ratzon Haborei Yisbarach Shmo*?

The Ramban answers that the reason that the Egyptians were punished is not because they enslaved *Bnei Yisrael* but rather because they went too far. Hashem decreed that *Bnei Yisrael* would be enslaved by the Egyptians, but they decided that they wanted to destroy *Bnei Yisrael*, and that is what led to the Egyptians' punishment. Additionally, the reason that they were punished is because their intentions in the enslavement was not to fulfill the will of Hashem but rather to have slaves. The Ramban brings an example where he says that if a person was sentenced to death in heaven, and then bandits were to come and kill said person, those bandits are still liable to death, because they had no idea that this person was doomed to die, and as such had no right to kill him. Similarly, with *Mitzrayim* they had no idea that it was the *Ratzon* of Hashem for *Bnei Yisrael* to be enslaved, and as such when they enslaved *Klal Yisrael* they were punished for what they thought they did wrong.

Another answer offered by Rav Yaakov Kenievsky (the *Kehilas Yaakov*) is that even though *Klal Yisrael* may have been deserving of certain punishments, it does not mean that a nation can take it upon themselves to bring about those punishments. He explains that even though *Bnei Yisrael* was supposed to be enslaved, it does not mean that the Egyptians had the right to be the conveyors of said punishments. How can a nation say that they will take it upon themselves to be the executioner of God (unless the *Navi* tells them to) and be the ones who punish for Hashem's sake? Rav Kanievsky goes further to say that the failed *nisayon* of one person can turn into the *nisayon* of another person to not exact retribution, because who are we to decide who deserves what.

ARAMI OVED AVIאַרְמִי אוֹבֵד אָבִי

Ponatan Burns ("22)

In the middle of the *Maggid* section of the *Haggadah* we recite, "אַרְמִי אוֹבֵד אָבִי," a remembrance of the cruelty of Lavan who, like Pharaoh, sought to kill out *Klal Yisrael* through Eliezer and Yaakov. As the *Mishna* in *Pesachim* (116a) notes,

"מתחיל בגנות ומסיים בשבח. ודורש מ"אַרמי אוֹבֵד אָבִי", עד שיגמור כל הפרשה כולה."

The Rambam in *Hilchos Chametz Umatzah* (7:4) codifies this into *Halachah*,

כיצד? מתחיל ומספר שבתחלה היו אבותינו בימי תרח ומלפניו כופרים וטועין אחר ההבדל ורודפין אחר עבודת אלילים. ומסיים בדת האמת ושקרבונו המקום לו והבדילנו מהאמות וקרבנו ליחודו. וכן מתחיל ומודיע שעבדים היינו לפרעה במצרים וכל הרעה שגמלנו ומסיים בנסים ובנפלאות שנעשו לנו ובהרותנו. והוא שידרש מ(דברים כו ה) "אַרמי אוֹבֵד אָבִי" עד שיגמר כל הפרשה.

According to the Rambam, there seem to be two aspects to "מתחיל בגנות ומסיים בשבח" – "starting with disgrace and ending with praise." First, we must remember that *Klal Yisrael* has undergone a spiritual change: while the family of Terach (Lavan's great-grandfather) was involved in heresy and the pursuit of *Avoda Zara*. *Yetzias Mitzraim* served as the beginning of our communal commitment to Hashem and the catalyst of our *Kabala Hatorah*. Likewise, we recount our slavery to evil Pharaoh and conclude with Hashem's miracles which brought us to freedom.

While thinking about these two aspects of "מתחיל בגנות ומסיים בשבח" which we tell on the *Seder* night, both *עבדים היינו* and *אַרמי אוֹבֵד אָבִי*, something interesting stands out. It would seem natural to center *Maggid* around *Sefer Shemos*, the *Sefer* which records the literal exodus from Egypt. Instead of *Shemos*, both passages appear in *Sefer Devarim* (6:20-24 and 26:5 respectively). While the *Pesukim* in *Ki Savo* it might be the shorter and easier option to choose from, it seems to make less sense than to choose from the *Sefer* in which the story of *Yetzias Metzraim* actually occurred. Why would we choose to quote these *pesukim* which appear in *Devarim*? [With regard to the first aspect of "מתחיל בגנות ומסיים בשבח" as cited by the Rambam, that of our commitment to Hashem, our question is indeed pertinent; while the *גנות* of idolatry began in *Sefer Bereishis*, the closeness to Hashem which the Rambam mentions was strengthened in *Sefer Shemos*.]

The first answer to this question can be answered by taking a look at the *Pesukim* of *Perek Chaf-Vav* in *Sefer Devarim*. *אַרמי אוֹבֵד אָבִי* is a declaration at the beginning of of the *Mikra Bikkurim*, a part of the ceremony of bringing one's first fruits to the *Bais Hamikdash*. In context, cit-

ing אָרְמֵי אֶבֶד אֲבִי in *Sefer Devarim* makes sense. The purpose of bringing the *Bikkurim* to the *Bais Hamikdash* was in order to express *Hakaras Hatov* to *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*. Against this backdrop it seems especially fitting for us to quote these *pesukim* from *Sefer Devarim*. The שְׁבַח, praise, that we owe Hashem is certainly an aspect of this *Hakaras Hatov* and it is therefore not only appropriate, but opportune to choose from *Devarim Perek Chaf-Vav*.

Another answer, cited by Rav Yosef Zvi Rimon, relates to *Devarim* as providing an expansive look into our freedom: that the times of Yaakov *Avinu* are directly relevant and are as well steps in the divine plan which leads *Klal Yisrael*. [This relates to both aspects of מִתְהִיל בְּגוֹת וּמְסִיִּים בְּשֶׁבַח, in terms of our ultimate connection to Hashem and the physical freedom from slavery which we experienced.] Rav Rimon relates this idea to *Bikkurim* as well, noting that the bringing of first fruits is itself a return to one's beginnings. A person who has traveled to Yerushalayim takes the first fruit. This in turn prompts him to think about his core beliefs, his foundation, and he reflects on the beginnings of *Klal Yisrael* and the tremendous *Bracha* given to us by Hashem.

With the recitation of both *pesukim* from *Devarim*, אָרְמֵי אֶבֶד אֲבִי and עֲבָדֶיךָ, one is offering a elevated *Hakaras Hatov*, one which not only recognises the present, but has an appreciation for the past.

### Lavan Worse than Pharaoh?

*Fitzchak Eagler ('22)*

Google defines a preamble as “a preliminary or preparatory statement.” With that definition in mind, a quick glance at the *Haggadah* reveals that much of *maggid*, the section devoted to telling over the story of our exodus from *Mitzrayim*, is just a preamble. First, we introduce the *matzah*, the main prop we will be using to tell the story. Next, we invite in any guests in need of a host. The child then poses a number of introductory questions about the uniqueness of this night, and we explain to him that we would still be slaves today if *Hashem* had not taken us out of *Mitzrayim*. This seems to be the opening to the actual telling of the story, but then we get side tracked once again, occupying ourselves with the story in Bnei Brak, the four sons, the timing of *Pesach*, and the origins of our special relationship with Hashem. Finally, we get to the climax, the section of the *Torah* (*Devarim* 26:5-9) prescribed by the *Mishnah* (*Pesachim* 10:4) as the established text to be used as the source material for the *Yetzias Mitzrayim* story.

After all of this prelude and introduction, we would expect the *Haggadah* to jump right into those *pesukim* which are centered around this long awaited *Yetzias Mitzrayim* story. Yet it doesn't. The *Haggadah* starts off its story by describing how Pharaoh, the antagonist of our story,

wasn't nearly as bad as Lavan, Yaakov's adversary. Rav Chaim Soloveitchik asks a very simple question on this: why is this relevant? If anything, this insight about Lavan's villainy seems to undermine the narrative we are trying to portray. Pharoah is the enemy of our story, the evil king who refuses to release *Bnei Yisrael* until Hashem heroically rescues us from him, so why do we start off our story by downplaying his cruelty?

Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik provides an insight into this Pharoah-Lavan comparison that I believe can help us answer this question. The Rav (as quoted in the *Haggadah* compiled from his teachings, *Exalted Evening*) explains that the difference between Lavan and Pharoah was not that Lavan had worse *intentions* than Pharoah, because in truth, both of these *resha'im* were equal in their shared radical antisemitism. Instead, the difference between them is how they chose to act on those evil intentions. The *Torah* records that Lavan tells Yaakov and his wives (who are also Lavan's daughters) that he would've harmed them if Hashem had not explicitly forbidden him from doing so (*Bereishis* 31:29). *Hakesav Vehakabalah* comments that the word that Lavan uses, *imachem*, is plural, because Lavan was willing to harm even his daughters and grandsons in order to satiate his intense hatred towards Yaakov. This stands in stark contrast to Pharoah, as Pharoah remained steadfast in his persecution of *Bnei Yisrael* despite the punishments Hashem inflicted upon the *Mitzriy'im*, yet immediately upon the death of his firstborn son he capitulated to Moshe and his requests (see *Shemos* 12:29-31). Furthermore, I would humbly add, while Lavan seemed to have no mercy for anyone, Pharoah's mercy didn't stop at just his family- he even allows Moshe to stay alive when he returns from *Midyan*, possibly because Pharoah developed a soft spot for this man who had grown up in his house under the care of his daughter. It comes out that while Lavan was almost mentally unstable, willing to harm even his own children and grandchildren just because of their association with Yaakov, Pharoah operated within the confines of normal human psychology, capable of feeling emotions such as love and compassion.

This idea is not just suggested by the Rav based on a number of outside sources, it is even reflected in the *Haggadah* itself. The *Haggadah* goes on to describe that the reason why Lavan is worse than Pharoah is because Lavan tried to exterminate the entire Jewish nation, while Pharoah only decreed genocide upon the Jewish men. Rabbi Mendelson explained that Lavan was attempting the impossible - the extermination of a nation which had a G-d given guarantee that it would survive for the rest of time. Pharoah, on the other hand, had a much more elaborate plan. Pharoah wanted to enslave *Bnei Yisrael*, making them into a downtrodden people devoid of any appreciation or pride in their Jewish identity, and then, to finish it off, he began to kill all of the men, firstly to ensure

that no leader would emerge to save *Bnei Yisrael*, and secondly to ensure that Jewish women of the next generation would be forced to intermarry with *Mitzri* men, allowing the Jewish nation to technically continue (as the babies born to these Jewish women would still be Jews) while effectively turning them into Egyptians. While Lavan *attempted* the more extreme feat- the extermination of an entire nation, not just its men- Pharaoh *successfully performed* his more realistic scheme.

I think that this understanding provides us with the key to unlocking our original question. Why do we emphasize in the beginning of the *Haggadah* that Lavan is worse than Pharaoh? We want to highlight that Pharaoh, as opposed to Lavan, was not acting on an irrational impulse coming from a deranged, even psychotic personality. Instead, Pharaoh adopted a calculated, premeditated approach as to how he would wipe out the Jewish people. Perhaps Lavan is parallel to what *chazal* refer to as a *mumar letei'avon*, one who rebels on the basis of desires and temptations he feels, while Pharaoh is similar to a *mumar lehachis*, one who rebels solely for the purpose of rebelling, one who doesn't do evil because he gave in to the *yetzer hara*, but because he made the conscious choice to pursue such activities. Thus, it's possible that the *Haggadah* is telling us that Lavan *attempted* a deed much worse than Pharaoh's, a deed he never could've accomplished, in order to display that on the inside, Pharaoh's intentions were perhaps even worse than Lavan's, as he was acting based on rational thought rather than spontaneous instinct. This, then, serves as the perfect final introduction for the story we are about to describe, as it allows us to understand much deeper the motivations driving our main antagonist, Pharaoh, in hatching the plot the *Haggadah* goes on to describe, an elaborate, multi-stepped plan which gradually drew *Bnei Yisrael* into its trap, resulting in our enslavement to this well thought out *rasha*.

### VEYOTZIANU HASHEM

#### An Angel Among Us?

*Dor Hochman (23)*

The *Haggadah* says:

"ויצאנו ה' ממצרים" - לא על ידי מלאך

"and Hashem took us out of *Mitzrayim*" - not through the hands of a *malach*.

There is a famous question asked on this line. We know that *Hashem* Himself killed all of the first born *Mitzrim* except for Pharaoh. However, the *passuk* says:

ולא יתן המשחית לבא אל בתיכם לנגף

*And I [Hashem] will not let the destroyer come to [Bnei Yisrael's] hous-*

es to attack. (*Shemos 12:23*).

It seems from here that Hashem is allowing the *Malach Hamaves* to kill the *Mitzrim* only and not the *Bnei Yisrael*, yet the *Haggadah* says that only Hashem was doing the killing. Why do we have two different explanations of this one event?

The Vilna Gaon answers famously by explaining that *Hashem* was the only one killing the firstborn children. The reason the *passuk* says that *Hashem* won't let the *Malach Hamaves* enter the houses is because it might have been time for a Jewish man to die who happened to be a first born, and the *Mitzrim* would have claimed that *Hashem* didn't have any real power because some of the Jewish people died as well. That is why the *passuk* told us that any *malachim* would not be killing anyone on that night and it was strictly the "strong arm" of *Hashem*.

The Me'am Loetz also gives an answer to this question. He explained that since Moshe was on the spiritual level of a *malach*, when the *Torah* mentions that "[*Hashem*] sent an angel and brought us out of Egypt" (*Bamidbar 20:16*), it was not talking about a normal angel, but rather it was talking about Moshe, because he was the one who spoke to Pharaoh and gave him all of the warnings that the *Bnei Yisrael* were going to leave *Mitzrayim*. It should have been virtually impossible for us to be able to leave *Mitzrayim*, which is the reason it had to be solely Hashem who took us out, not a *malach*.

### TEN MAKOS

#### Suffering from Success

*Aaron Sisser (23)*

We will soon be having a special feast. This special meal is one that we only have twice a year, and we do it on specific consecutive days in *Nissan*. We have great food at the meal, yet there are also some very important ritual procedures and customs which we do, that we can learn from. This meal is, of course, the *Seder*. While the *Matzah* may be delicious, and the wheatless brownies may be as tasty as can be, there is a long time to wait until we can get to the good food. First, we must go through the entire story of the exodus of our ancestors from bondage in Egypt.

The climax of this retelling of the events begins with the *Makkot* that Hashem inflicts on the Egyptians. We start with talking about the 10 *Makkot*, and then transition to *Kriyas Yam Suf* and freedom. We are now exuberant and ecstatic that we are finally free from the horrible slavery. BUT WAIT! Before you do anything happy, take some drops out of your cup of wine and pour them onto your plate.

What is the meaning behind this *Minhag* of spilling drops of wine before

moving on with the happiness that we feel at *Yetzias Mitzrayim*?

Many have heard the explanation that we do this as we are not supposed to feel overly happy at the downfall of our enemies. While we could and should celebrate our success, we should still feel bad for others' destruction. This is a reason why we take out drops from our *Kos* when we get to the recounting of the *Makkot* that the Egyptians were inflicted with. Even though they were very joyous occasions for *Bnei Yisrael* we still want to show that it pains us a little that our enemies -- who are also the creations of Hashem -- should suffer. We still have a slight amount of pity on our enemies, despite all of the terrible things that they have done to us, and it hurts us a little that they have to suffer for our success.

However, there is much more to the story. When we delve deeper, we can really see how we can apply this sentiment to ourselves. This idea of feeling bad for our enemies was initially mentioned by Shmuel HaKatan in *Pirkei Avot*. Shmuel HaKatan quotes *Mishlei* which says that "*If your enemy falls, do not rejoice; if he trips, don't be overjoyed, since Hashem will see it and be displeased, and His wrath will be on you*". This means that if our enemies suffer, we should not be happy. We do not want Hashem to do bad to His creations, and while we know it is necessary, it is still hard for us to accept. Now, who was Shmuel HaKatan, this wise sage who taught us such an important lesson?

Well, as it turns out, this was not the only important contribution that Shmuel HaKatan made to Jewish lifestyle today. Three times every day we recite the *Shemoneh Esrei*. This literally translates to the number eighteen, signifying the eighteen *Brachot* in *Shemoneh Esrei*. However, if one actually counts the *Brachot*, they will realize that there are actually nineteen *Brachot*. This is because the *Bracha* of *Velamalshinim* was added to our eighteen *Brachot*. If this is the case though, then why did we not just rename the *Tefillah* to the *Tisha Esrei*, translating to nineteen? Why did we leave *Velamalshinim* out of the count of *Brachot*? We kept the name of *Shemoneh Esrei* because of the content of this additional *Bracha*. This *Bracha* is where we pray to Hashem that for those who slander us, there should be no hope. For those who oppose and abuse us, they should be wiped off of the face of the Earth. Despite the fact that these are necessary requests that we must make to *Hashem*, we still feel bad about making them. We still feel sorry that we have to *Daven* for these terrible things to happen to Hashem's creations. Thus, in a symbolic act of sadness that we have to make this *Bracha*, we leave *Velamalshinim* out of the count of *Brachot*.

Here is the big reveal, though. Who wrote this *Bracha* which talks about the downfall of our enemies? Who wrote the nineteenth *Bracha* in the *Shemoneh Esrei*? Who wrote *Velamalshinim*? It was none other than

Shmuel HaKatan! The same Shmuel HaKatan who told us to not overdo our happiness at the downfall of our enemies. He is the one who wrote the words that we say every day in order to cause the downfall of our enemies. We see from here how much Shmuel HaKatan realized the gravity of what he was doing. In both the stories that we recount at the *Seder* and in Shmuel HaKatan's addition to *Shemoneh Esrei*, we talk about the downfall of our enemies. Undoubtedly, this has given us, and will give us, indirect joy, as we are happy that we are finally free from the hands of our enemies. Yet, Shmuel HaKatan makes sure to teach us that we should still be sad that our enemies had to suffer. Shmuel HaKatan wants us to care about our fellow human beings, even our enemies. Shmuel HaKatan showed, that even though we talk about the downfall of our enemies at the *Seder*, and even though *he wrote* the paragraph in *Shemoneh Esrei* that talks about how much we desire the ending of our adversaries, we still must always keep in mind that there was still some price to pay for salvation. There was still some cost to our good fortunes. There was still some suffering for our success.

It is this lesson that we should take to heart. Not only should we not hope for the downfall of others, but even when we know that others' downfall is a necessity for the greater good, we should still feel sad that this is the outcome that must occur. Even when Hashem smites our enemies for us in order to redeem us, or when we are forced to defeat those who abuse us in order to maintain our own safety, because this is the only way to achieve good and peace, we should still have pity for our enemies. We should still lament that this was the only good resolution of events. We should *Daven* that the future should be better and more peaceful, and that we should have no enemies to whom Hashem would have to deal these terrible fates. We should *Daven* that our future should be bright with no enemies that want bad for us. We should *Daven* that Hashem never has to use His power against our enemies, as we pray that we should always have no enemies at all! We should *Daven* for good and peace for our future!

This is also the reason why we limit our happiness and do not do a complete *Hallel* on the second days of *Yom Tov*: we are sad that the Egyptians had to suffer, and limit our celebrations as such.

It is this lesson that Shmuel HaKatan desires to teach us. This is the reason why we do not say a complete *Hallel* on the second days of *Pesach*. This is the reason why *Velamalshinim* is not included in the count of *Brachot* in *Shemoneh Esrei*. This is why we delay our happiness at *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, to remember the suffering of the Egyptians by spilling out drops from our *Kos* when we reach the recounting of the *Makkot* by the *Seder* table. Hopefully, the actions and writings of Shmuel HaKatan can teach us how important a lesson this is. We should realize

that when Hashem gives us salvation at the downfall of others, we should remember to feel sorry for our adversaries. We should be mindful and have pity for those who are suffering from our success.

*Thank you to Avidan Loike ('22) and Benny Cohen ('23) for helping me with this Dvar Torah.*

### DAYEINU

#### Was it Really Enough?

*Matan Marmor ('25)*

“*Dayeinu*” is a well-acknowledged part of the *Haggadah* because it is a song that everyone sings together. But has anyone ever stopped to think about what it actually means? Basically, we are going through all the things that Hashem did for us from *Yetzias Mitzrayim* all the way to when we go into *Eretz Yisrael*, and we are saying that at any moment what Hashem did for us would have been enough. But would it really have been enough? There are many things that we say would have been enough in “*Dayeinu*,” but if we think about it really wouldn’t have been enough and we would have needed the next step. Two examples are:

1. We say that if Hashem split the sea for us but he didn’t take us through on dry land it would have been enough. If we stop and think about this, this statement makes no sense. The whole point of Hashem splitting the sea is so we would be able to go through. How would it have been good enough if the sea was split and we didn’t go through? The Egyptians would have killed us, and that isn’t good!! And also, the next thing we say in “*Dayeinu*” is that if Hashem brought us through the *Yam Suf* on dry land but didn’t drown the Egyptians in it, it would have been enough. In this case also the Egyptians would end up killing us, as they would reach the other side of the *Yam Suf*. The Baruch She’amar asks the question about bringing *Bnei Yisrael* through on dry ground and gives an answer. The answer is that even though Hashem split the sea for us, one would have expected the ground to be muddy because it was just under water, but Hashem made a miracle for us and had us walk through the sea on dry land. As for the second question about it being enough if the Egyptians didn’t drown in the *Yam Suf*, I have my own idea. Hashem could have not hardened Pharaoh’s heart and made sure that the Egyptians wouldn’t come to try to kill *Bnei Yisrael* again. Hashem could have also killed all the Egyptians in a different way. By having the Egyptians follow *Bnei Yisrael* through the *Yam Suf* and then making them drown, Hashem was showing us two things. Firstly, Hashem wanted to kill *cheil Pharaoh* right in front of us to assure us that the Egyptians would never come after us again. Hashem also wanted the Egyptians to drown in the *Yam Suf* in front of us to show us that Hashem makes open miracles like

*keriyas Yam Suf* only for the Jews, not for any other nation.

2. We say that if Hashem brought us to *Har Sinai* but he didn't give us the *Torah* it would have been enough. But what would be the point of that? For what other purpose are we going to *Har Sinai* if not for the purpose of receiving the *Torah*? The *Shibolei Haleket* and the *Ephod Bad* say that just the experience of being at *Har Sinai* with the thunder and the *kol shofar* and hearing *Hashem's* voice is an experience that is a huge miracle, and it also reassures us that *Hashem* will always be with us.

The main point of all this and a lesson that we can learn from "*Dayeinu*" is that we need to appreciate everything that *Hashem* does for us at all times.

### **No Really, Can we Dayeinu the Song Dayeinu?**

*Aryeh 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 *hagadah*, 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.

**RABAN GAMLIEL HAYA OMEIR**  
**Developing Our Insides to Match Our Outsides**

*Rabbi Shimon Schenker*

*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 Maror.*

The *Rishonim* disagree about what a person doesn't fulfill by omitting these items at the *Seder*. *Tosafos* in *Pesachim* 115 (*D"H Vamar-tem*) says that a person needs to specifically say these three things in order to fulfill those specific *mitzvos*. Since in general we have a *hekesh* (biblical comparison) between (*Korban*) *Pesach*, *Matzah* and *Maror*, 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 "*Vamar-tem 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 Raban Gamliel, whoever does not speak about *Pesach*, *Matzah* and *Maror* 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 “*L’haros 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 speaking 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 *Shli”ta* points out in his commentary to the *Haggadah* that Rav Yisrael Kanievsky ZT”L writes in the *Kehillas Yaakov* that the entire *mitzvah* of *Maggid* cannot be fulfilled just anytime one would like, it can only be fulfilled when the *Korban Pesach*, *Matzah* and *Maror* 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*, *Maror* 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.

### ***BECHOL DOR VADOR***

#### **How can I imagine being part of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*?**

*Eitan Rochwarger (23)*

"בְּכָל־דּוֹר וָדוֹר חַיֵּב אָדָם לְרַאוֹת אֶת־עַצְמוֹ כְּאִלוּ הוּא יֵצֵא מִמִּצְרַיִם, שְׁנֹאֲמַר: וְהִגַּדְתָּ לְבִנְךָ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא לֵאמֹר, בְּעִבּוֹר זֶה עָשָׂה ה' לִי בְּצֵאתִי מִמִּצְרַיִם. לֹא אֶת־אֲבוֹתֵינוּ בְּלִבְךָ גָּאֵל הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא, אֲלֵא אִף אוֹתְנוּ גָּאֵל עִמָּהֶם, שְׁנֹאֲמַר: וְאוֹתְנוּ הוֹצִיא מִשָּׁם, לְמַעַן הִבִּיא אוֹתְנוּ, לְתֵת לָנוּ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לְאַבְרָהָם."

"In every generation, one is obligated to regard himself as though he himself had actually gone out from *Mitzrayim*, as it says,

“You shall tell your son on that day saying, “For the sake of this, Hashem did so for me when I went out from Mitzrayim.” Not only our fathers did Hashem redeem, but also us did He redeem with them as it says, “And He brought us out from there so that He could bring us and give us the Land which He had promised to our fathers.” (The *Pesach Haggadah*)

The *Haggadah* is telling us here that we need to feel on a personal level that we were part of *yetzias Mitzrayim* no matter how many years ago the actual event was. This idea is one that many find troublesome. How can I feel as if I was taken out of slavery in *Mitzrayim* when the actual event happened thousands of years ago?

Many try to connect more recent stories of “enslavement”. Many people who were in Russia during the time of the second world war felt as if leaving Europe was like leaving *Mitzrayim* and then showing up in America was comparable to the *midbar* (the desert the Jews traveled in for forty years after *yetzias Mitzrayim*). While it is true that it is good we are in America, we cannot forget that we are merely “strangers in the land (*Shemos* 23:9)”. We have left *Mitzrayim* and are wandering in the *midbar*. It’s important that we keep the end in sight and do not get too comfortable where we are. This is seen when the Jews began being slaves in *Mitzrayim*. Since as long as Ya’akov’s sons (the *shevatim*) were alive, the Jews were not slaves. This is due to the fact that the Jews saw the sons and understood that their real home was in *Eretz Yisroel*, not in *Mitzrayim*. But once the last of the sons passed away (Levi), the Jews came to understand that they were “in a land not theirs” (*Bereshis* 15:13). In this *possuk* Hashem tells Avraham that his descendants will be strangers in this land which is not theirs for four hundred years. The Jews now became comfortable in *Mitzrayim* since they believed they would be there for hundreds more years. This is a common theme throughout *Tanach* and only pushes the Jews further away from Hashem.

Another approach is given in the *Minchas Ani* (a commentary on the *Haggadah*). He notes that the placement of this paragraph is right after Rabban Gamliel’s three major food items of the *seder*. The *Minchas Ani* continues that this is how we explain Rabban Gamliel’s order. Since one would have thought the *marror* should be first, but Rabban Gamliel puts it last. The order is explained as follows: the *korban Pesach* is a reminder of Hashem’s greatness. He passed over the Jewish homes and only struck the *Mitzrim* in the final *makkah* (*makkas bechoros* - the killing of the firstborns). *Matzah* is a reminder of two aspects from the *Pesach* story: comfort and difficulties; we eat *matazah*, because Hashem redeemed us from slavery and to remind us of what we ate when we were slaves. *Marror* though is only a remembrance of slavery and affliction.

When someone asks why *marror* is part of the *seder*, the answer is that it represents this humiliation to our ancestors. When we eat the *marror* at the *seder* we feel a miniscule amount of their suffering. Once we remember and feel the suffering of our ancestors, we can truly feel as if we are leaving *mitzrayim* ourselves and develop a stronger sense of humility.

Another approach as to how to achieve this personal feeling of leaving *Mitzrayim* focuses on the feeling of preparedness for *ge'ulah* and involves looking at a phrase said every night in the extended *Kri'as Shema al Hamitah*: "לְיִשׁוּעָתְךָ קָרִיתִי ה', - "I wait for Your salvation (the coming of *moshiach* and *ge'ulah*), Hashem". The fact that this and other expressions of yearning for *ge'ulah* - including several *berachos* of the *Shemoneh Esrei* - are part of our daily prayers, shows our *emunah* that the *geulah* will come. And even if it does not, we say these *tefilos* with conviction and hope again the next day. This constant review and wanting of *moshiach* shows Hashem how we are waiting and are prepared to go at any second. This is, perhaps, an important point to keep in the front of our minds at the *seder* so that we can feel the anticipation of *Bnei Yisrael* as they were on their way out of exile in Egypt.

### 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 *marshal* 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 בחוקיך ”  
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 [ע"צ]

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 תרנייהו: בזמן שביית המקדש קיים — מנבח מכפר על אדם, עקשיו — שילתגו 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?)

### MOTZEE MATZAH

#### Machine Matzah: Ideal or Not?

*Noam Sheffey (25)*

In today's day and age, we find ourselves always talking about one topic when it comes to *Motzei Matzah*, and that is none other than machine-made *matzah*. What would be ideal for the *mitzvah* these days, with *shemurah matzah* coming into effect? Since the time these *matzahs* were first being made, there were always arguments amongst the *Poskim* regarding the status of these *matzahs*. One fascinating question that was in Rav Rimon's *Haggadah* is, can machine-made *matzah* be considered the *matzah shemura* eaten at the *seder*. One answer comes from the *Rashba*, he writes that a deaf person or a minor who kneads the dough, and says *l'shem matzahs mitzvah* would not be accepted as valid *matzah* even if there was a third party around him. This opinion comes into play with machine *matzah*; we could say that the machine is incapable of having the right mindset and as such should not be considered *shemurah matzah*. This answer was written in the *Shulchan Aruch*, and the *Mishna Berura* cites it as well. We also know that *Reb Chaim of Sanz* and *The Avnei Nezer* were very *makpid* on not using machine *matzah* at the *seder*. But some hold the opinion that even turning on the machine would be considered a *halachic* action, and if this person has the intention when turning on the machine that it is *l'shem matzahs mitzvah* then some would say it is considered *shemurah*, such as the *Ksav Sofer*.

He thinks it is different from a deaf person as when they are making the *matzahs* the third party is not controlling the actual making of the *matzah*, on other hand, here there is a person controlling the machine, and he has the intention of *l'shem matzahs mitzvah*. It is important to mention that this whole *machlokes* only applies regarding the *kezayis* of *mitzvah matzah*. However, for the other days of *Pesach*, the *Rambam* and the *Rif* say that if the *matzah* was guarded against fermentation then it is fine to eat and there is no need to worry about it being *chametz*. We learn from this the big difference between the first night and the rest of *Pesach*. We learn that when the *mitzvah* counts is when we should use the best *matzah*, that being handmade. Also one should use the same *matzahs* for the rest of the *mitzvos* of that evening. But on the other days when there is no sake to guard for the sake of the *mitzvah*, but to guard against fer-

mentation, machine *matzah* would be considered the same as regular *shemurah*. We see from this how modern-day ramifications could play such a big role in some of the biggest *mitzvos* we do in Judaism.

### **Why is This Mitzvah Different from All Other Mitzvos?**

*Yaakov Feldman (24)*

One interesting *halachah* related to *Erev Pesach* is the prohibition against eating before dark. Rashi and the Rashbam maintain that this is to preserve one's appetite for *Matzah*, which is a *hiddur mitzvah*. However, it is unclear that a stronger appetite, simply an internal feeling, can serve as a *hiddur mitzvah*. The commonly accepted opinion is that *hiddur mitzvah* only applies to objects that are physically beautiful and used to fulfill a *mitzvah*.

In response to this question, the *Avnei Nezer* asserted that there is indeed another type of *hiddur mitzvah* in which the *mitzvah* action itself is strengthened, in this case, having a stronger appetite for *matzah*. This idea is supported by a story in *Meseches Pesachim* (107b) that Rava would drink wine on *Erev Pesach* in order to stimulate his appetite.

However, a statement later on that same *Daf* seems to give a different reason not to eat on *Erev Pesach*, citing *achilah gasah*, essentially overeating, as the concern.

In fact, both interpretations are a bit surprising, as rabbinic prohibitions are generally only used to protect a prohibition from the *Torah*. In this case, the prohibition of eating *matzah* on *Erev Pesach* is seemingly protecting the *Mitzvas Aseh* of eating *matzah*, and according to Rashi and the Rashbam, it is not even for the *mitzvah* itself but for an enhancement of the *mitzvah*.

Furthermore, Tosfos in *Meseches Pesachim* also mentions a prohibition to not eat *matzah* specifically on the whole day of *Erev Pesach*. There is a *machlokes* concerning the reason for this rule, with the two main opinions being either that the prohibition is based on *pesukim* that limit eating *matzah* to the nighttime, or that it's to maintain one's appetite for the *matzah* that is to be eaten later at the *seder*. The Rambam interprets this *Din* completely differently, saying that we need to avoid eating *matzah* on *Erev Pesach* in order to make it clear that the *matzah* eaten later is part of a *mitzvah*. All of these interpretations contribute to one main point - the more eager one is to eat *matzah*, the more connected he will be to the entire *Pesach* and *Seder* experience.

The unusually placed rabbinic prohibition to protect the positive *mitzvah* of eating *matzah* shows us that *Matzah* is more than a non-*chametz* bread option for *Pesach*, it's an integral part of the story of *yetzias mitzrayim* that helps us become more immersed in the themes of *Pesach*.

*Matzah* is not simply about running away from slavery as it is running towards *Hashem* and the *Torah*. *Matzah* is not only a *chametz* “substitute”, but a symbol of initiative and dedication to *Hashem* after being liberated from the slavery we experienced under *mitzrayim*. Interestingly, a close look at the Rambam’s formulation of the *halachos* of *Erev Pesach* illustrates this point further. He lists three things: to abstain from *Matzah* in order to distinguish it from the *Matzah* to be eaten later; not to eat too much in general in the afternoon; and he also notes that *chachamim* would take upon themselves to not eat any food at all for the sake of “*chavivus*”.

Is this last element, *chavivus*, just one more degree of attention to *matzah*, or is it perhaps a broader statement of relationship to the *Torah* as a whole? In some texts, the Rambam’s language is rendered, “*V’yihyu matzos chavivin alav*” – the *matzos* should be endeared to him. However, in other texts, such as the Shabsi Frankel edition, the language is “*V’yihyu mitzvos chavivin alav*” the *mitzvos*, in their totality, should be endeared to him. If this is the case, the points converge: on *Erev Pesach* we are striving to display a comprehensive excitement for all *mitzvos*, while at the same time this is a *Pesach*-specific goal, intertwined with the commemoration of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*.

Indeed, this was the case at that moment in time. The *Torah* tells us that the Jews carried the *Matzah* “on their shoulders”. Rashi notes that although they could have had their animals carry the load, they wanted to display their affection for what they were carrying: “*mechav’vim hayu es hamitzvah*”. The *Mechilta*, Rashi’s source, has the language “*shehayu mechav’vin es ha-mitzvos*”. At this crucial moment of liberation, not only is *matzah* present but also a prominent theme of passion for the totality of *mitzvos*.

On *Pesach* night, we recognize that *Matzah* is not just an ordinary *Mitzvah*, but it represents our commitment to all of the *Torah* from the very beginning and thus, requires unique enthusiasm and protection. Like the *Seder* night itself, it is different from all others.

### Matzah and Freedom

*Eitan Isaacs (24)*

What in the world does *Matzah* have to do with freedom!? It's true that when we were brought out of Egypt, we only had time to prepare *Matzah*, therefore eating *matzah* on *Seder* night represents freedom.

However, if *Matzah* (which took very little time to bake) was what the Egyptians served us in order to maximize our working hours, how does *matzah* represent freedom? It would seem to represent quite the opposite. Shouldn't we have bagels and bread, which would certainly represent freedom, as this is the food we may now eat as free people?

Rav Grunfeld provided the following answer. Being able to serve *Hashem* is what it means to be free. Freedom does not imply that we are free of all obligations and may serve ourselves. Rather than serving *Hashem*, freedom is the ability to serve *Hashem*. Freedom does not imply that we are free of all obligations and can serve ourselves. Being able to serve *Hashem* rather than the Egyptian people is what it means to be free. This is exactly what the "Exodus" is about. *Hashem* freed us from Egypt's slavery, and allowed us to devote our lives to serving Him. As a result, bagels do not remind us of freedom, nor do they assist us in internalizing the fact that *Hashem* has set us free; rather, they lead us to believe that we are free of all obligations. However, that is not the case. It's only *matzah*, where the baker is bound by time, that reminds us of our freedom, since the *matzah* reminds us to serve *Hashem* rather than anything else.

### MAROR

#### The Real Meror

*Israel Skuratovsky (23)*

The Feast of the Passover was commanded to celebrate the Exodus of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. Central to this commandment is Israel's departure from a land that was hostile to *Torah* to a Holy Land for *Torah* observance. Accordingly, *halachah* obligates every Jew to imagine as if *Hashem* personally saved him from Egypt, from exile. Consequently, Jews should be concerned that many Passover seders, meant to commemorate redemption, instead preserve an exile-induced aberration: horseradish.

Moses details the Feast's specifications several times in the Pentateuch, including a repeated commandment to eat the Passover sacrifice with unleavened bread and bitter herbs:

וְאָכְלוּ אֶת־הַבָּשָׂר בַּלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה צְלִי־אֵשׁ וּמִצּוֹת עֵל־מַרְרִים יֹאכְלוּ

*They shall eat the flesh that same night, roasted with fire, and they shall eat it with unleavened bread in addition to bitter herbs. (Exodus 12:8)*

בַּחֹדֶשׁ הַשֵּׁנִי בָּאָרְבָּעָה עָשָׂר יוֹם בֵּין הָעֶרְבַּיִם יַעֲשׂוּ אֹתוֹ עֵל־מִצּוֹת וּמַרְרִים יֹאכְלוּהוּ:  
*In the second month on the fourteenth day at twilight, they shall celebrate it; they shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. (Numbers 9:11)*

The commandment to consume bitter herbs even in the Passover lamb's absence remains obligatory

(*Pesachim 28b, Mishneh Torah Leavened and Unleavened Bread 8:4*). However, the common practice to fulfill this commandment through horseradish is deficient, as will be demonstrated.

The word used in *Exodus 12:8* and *Numbers 9:11* is "maror," meaning "bitter thing," which comes from the word "marar," meaning

“to be bitter.” Bitterness is distinct from spice or sharpness. Horseradish and wasabi are sharp, but certainly not bitter. Coffee and grapefruit are bitter, but certainly not sharp.

The Mishna (*Pesã im* 2:6) lists several types of *yerakot* that qualify as *meror*. “*Yerakot*” are not simply “vegetables,” as often misused in Modern Hebrew. Rather, *yerakot* – literally, “greens,” – refer exclusively to green, leafy vegetables. That is why Rabbi Yehudah bar Ilai blesses *yerakot* with “*borei minei deshaim*” (He who creates various kinds of herbs) and not “*borei pri ha’adamah*” (He who creates fruit of the ground) (*Berachot* 6:1). The *Mishnah* continues that one may use the leafy vegetables’ leaves and stalks, whereas roots may not be used for *meror* (see *Siddur Beit Ya’akov*, R. Ya’akov Emden). Similarly, Rashi’s commentary on *Exodus* 12:8 states, “any bitter herb is called *maror*,” where plant *herbs* refer to the *leaves* or *stalk* of a plant, not the *root* of a plant. Therefore, *meror* must be an edible green leaf, and not a non-green root such as horseradish.

Returning to the text, the *Mishnah’s* list of *yerakot* are: *chazeret* (romaine lettuce), *ulashin* (chicory), *tamcha* (chervil), *charchavinah* (eryngo), and *maror* (sonchus). The *Baraita* later quoted in the Babylonian *Gemara* defines signs for *maror* greens: the plant’s leaves are silvery (not dark) green, and its stalks/ribs excrete a white, milky substance when cut (see *Piskei RiYaZ*, *Pesachim* 2:5:2). The *Baraita’s* description of *maror* matches romaine lettuce’s appearance, which has thick ribs on its leaves, and excretes a white, milky substance giving a bitter taste. Meanwhile, this *Baraita’s* description differs greatly from horseradish: a white, tapered root.

Furthermore, the Jerusalem *Gemara* (*Pesachim* 2:5) states that the *chazeret* of the *Mishnah* is known in Aramaic as “*chassin*.” Similarly, the Babylonian *Gemara* uses the word “*chassa*,” which is used in Modern Hebrew to refer to romaine lettuce. The Jerusalem *Gemara* remarks that *chassin* is only mildly bitter, especially when young, yet is preferred to other types of *meror* because it is similar to Israel’s sojourning in Egypt: starting off sweet (very slightly bitter), but growing more bitter with the passage of time (see *Sepher Avi Ha’ezri* 473, R. Eliezer ben Yoel HaLevi).

The reason that many Ashkenazi Jews have historically used horseradish for *meror* is clear: in colder European climates, leafy vegetables were unavailable during the Passover season, as explained by R. Tzvi Ashkenazi. Therefore, they were compelled to find alternatives such as horseradish. However, Ashkenazi decisors of *halachah* such as R. Tzvi Ashkenazi (*Responsa Cacham Tzvi*, Vol. 1, 119), R. Ya’akov Emden (*Siddur Beit Ya’akov*), and R. Moses Sofer (*Orach Chayyim* 132) all write that one should use romaine lettuce for *meror*. It is imperative to

mention that Jews have used romaine lettuce for *meror* since time immemorial, which R. Ovadia Yosef would stress every year (with a few swipes at Ashkenazi Jewry). For these reasons, R. Joseph B. Soloveitchik would have both lettuce and horseradish at his Passover seder.

This Passover, while reading the story of the Exodus, remember that the Lord took you out of Egypt, too. Therefore, just as the Jewish forefathers who left Egypt for a more authentic *Torah* experience, so too must contemporary Jews take the leap and restore the original *Torah* practice of *meror*.

### KORECH A Sandwich?

*Noam Josse ('17)*

The *Gemara* in *Pesachim* (115a) discusses the question of whether eating *Maror* with *Matzah* together as a sandwich would *mevatel* the *mitzvah* of *Matzah*. The *Psak Halacha* is that we eat both the *matzah* and *maror* separately, and then again together in Hillel's sandwich. However, it is important to consider what the problem would be of eating the *matzah* and *maror* together.

The Rashbam (*Pesachim* 115a) explains that since the taste of *Maror* is very strong, it will nullify the taste of the *Matzah*, meaning, even though there may be just as much *Matzah* as there is *Maror*, nonetheless the stronger taste of the *Maror* makes the *Matzah* insignificant. The Rabbeinu David explains that *Maror* has such a strong and unique taste that it can neutralize the taste of *matzah* even if there is an equal quantity of both foods. The Rashba points out that from here we can derive that part of the very *Mitzvah* of eating *Matzah* is tasting the unique flavor of *Matzah* and, when this is subsumed in some other taste, the *Mitzvah* is lost (hence why *Matzah Mevusheles* is problematic). The Rashbam derives his explanation from the *Halachos* of *Taaroves*. When there is a mixture of two foods the greater food always nullifies the smaller one. Hence why the stronger taste of *Maror* would nullify the taste of *Matzah*.

However, the *Gemara* itself invokes an opinion which says that *mitzvos* do not *mevatel* each other, so according to this opinion how does the stronger taste of *Maror* nullify the weaker taste of *Matzah*? The *Chasam Sofer* explains that despite the stronger taste of the *Maror*, when two foods are mixed that are of the same *min* — type — they do not nullify each other (this is the opinion of Rav Yehuda) even if one is more than the other. Of course *Matzah* and *Maror* are two very different types of food - one is a vegetable the other a type of bread. However, the *Chasam Sofer* explains that since both are '*mitzvos*', this common aspect makes them like two foods from the same type that do not nullify each

other in a mixture. Despite the debate between Rav Yehuda and the *Chachamim* as to whether *min b'mino* can be nullified or not, in the case of two *mitzvos* the *Chachamim* would agree to Rav Yehuda that the common aspect of the two would make them such that there is on *Bitul*

However, the *Gemara* itself notes that even according to the opinion that *mitzvos* do not nullify each other, nonetheless, in the case of *Matzah* and *Maror* one is a *Mitzvah diyoraysa (Matzah)*, and the other only a *mitzvah d'rabbanan (Maror)*. Hence even those who say that *mitzvos* do not nullify each other would agree that *Maror* does indeed nullify *Matzah*. Despite *Maror* also being a *mitzvah*, it is of a different degree than the *mitzvah* of *Matzah* and thus, these two *mitzvos* cannot be compared to the opinion of Rav Yehuda (that two types of food that are of the same type and therefore do not nullify each other even when one is bigger than the other). The *Mitzvah* of *Maror* is only a *Reshus* compared to the *Chiyuv* of *Matzah*.

In conclusion *Matzah* would seemingly be nullified in the stronger taste of the *Maror* and, because the two *mitzvos* are of different levels of obligation, one Biblical and one *Rabbinic*, there is no common element that would prevent the *Bitul* from taking place. Hillel on the other hand learns that the verse "They shall eat it (the *Korban Pesach*) with *matzos* and *maror*" indicates that *Matzah* and *Maror* must be eaten together. However, because there is no longer a *Korban Pesach* the *Chiyuv* of this *Passuk* can no longer be fulfilled properly. Hence a sandwich of only *Maror* and *Matzah* and no *Korban Pesach* is only a *Mitzvah De'Rabbanan*. *Tosafos* explains that Hillel's opinion is therefore to eat *Matzah* alone since it remains a *Chiyuv* from the Torah, and then to eat the *Maror* with the *Matzah*. For Hillel, the aforementioned verse indicates that there is only a *Mitzvah* of *Maror* when eaten along with *Matzah* (and ideally the *Korban Pesach*). Therefore, *Maror* is only fulfilled today, on a rabbinic level, by being eaten with *Matzah*. There is no issue here of two *mitzvos* nullifying each other since there are no two *mitzvos*. The *Mitzvah* from the Torah of *Matzah* has already been fulfilled by eating *Matzah* alone and then a new *mitzvah de'rabbanan* arises of *Matzah* and *Maror* together (not two separate *mitzvos* being combined together).

### SHULCHAN ORECH

Eat food. In fulfilling this we should be *zoche l'mashiach*.

### TZAFFUN

Can anyone FIND this *Dvar Torah*?

***BAREICH*****The Condition of the Avnei Nezer***Yaakov Weinstock (22)*

*Pesach* is filled with symbols that are supposed to invoke certain emotions and create in us the feeling as if we were there in Egypt and as if we were freed from Egypt. The *Seder* was designed this way to help us fulfill the obligation of the night of “*b’chol dor va’dor chayav adam li’ros (li’haros) es atzmo ki’eelu hu yatza mimitzrayim,*” that in each generation a person is obligated to view himself and present himself as if he left Egypt. Towards the end of *Maggid*, we read the opinion of Rabban Gamliel, that without proper discussions of certain symbols or objects one doesn’t fulfill their *Mitzvah* of *Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim*. Rav Chaim Soliveitchick also explains that the presentation and discussion of objects are part of what makes the *Mitzvah* of *Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim* different from the constant *Mitzvah* of *Zechiras Yetzias Mitzrayim*. These objects are *matzah*, *maror*, and *korban pesach*. Two of these symbols, *matzah* and *korban pesach*, merge together when we examine the *afikomen* and what is behind it. An issue that’s discussed concerning the *afikomen* is the span of time one has to eat it.

The *Gemara* in *Maseches Berachos* (9a) brings a *machlokes* between Rebbi Akiva and Rebbi Elazar Ben Azaryah about how long one has to eat the *korban pesach*. Rebbi Elazar Ben Azaryah holds that you have until *chatzos*. He learns this from the fact that when the *Torah* discusses *korban pesach* it uses the words “*balayla hahu,*” and by *makkas bechoros* it also uses the *lashon* of *balayla hahu*, so since we know that *makkas bechoros* took place at *chatzos*, therefore when the same language is used by *korban pesach* it also means *chatzos halayla*. However, Rebbi Akiva holds that you have until *amud hashachar* the next morning, because the *Torah* says you have to eat the *korban pesach* “*bichipazon,*” which means until the “*she’as chipazon,*” which Rashi explains is *amud hashachar*. The Chofetz Chaim (in the *Biur Halacha*) points out that there is a *machlokes* about how we *pasken*. Some *Rishonim* (Rambam, Ohr Zarua, Ba’al Ha’ittur) hold that we *pasken* like Rebbi Akiva, that one has all night to eat *korban Pesach*, because we have a rule that if there is an argument between Rebbi Akiva and one other *Tanna*, we *pasken* like Rebbi Akiva, and even though there are two *Stam Mishnayos* that are like Rebbe Elazar Ben Azaryah and one *Stam Mishnah* like Rebbi Akiva, it doesn’t matter. However, some *Rishonim* (Ba’alei Tosafos, Rabbeinu Chananel) say the *halacha* is like Rebbi Elazar ben Azaryah despite the rule of *halacha ki’rebbi Akiva meichaveiro*, because there are multiple *stam mishnayos* that assume like Rebbi Elazar Ben Azarya. Other *Rishonim* aren’t sure either way, and therefore they feel one should be *machmir* for Rebbe Elazar Ben Azaryah, too. The Ritva in *Maseches Bra-*

*chos* (D"R Amar Rav Yosef) says that the *nafka mina* of this *machlokes* nowadays is whether one can eat *matzah* after *chatzos*. According to Rebbi Elazar Ben Azarya, one isn't *yotzei matzah* if he eats it after *chatzos*, and according to Rebbi Akiva, one who eats *matzah* after *chatzos* is *yotzei*. Therefore, the *machlokes Rishonim* in how we *pasken* this *machlokes Amoraim* has major ramifications in terms of the time one has to eat *matzah*. The Rosh (*Arvei Pesachim, Siman 37*) says one should be *machmir* for Rebbi Elazar Ben Azaryah, because it's possible to understand that one a *derabannan* level one should. The reason these two topics - *Matzah* and *Korban Pesach*- are intertwined is because the *Gemara* in *Pesachim* (120b) brings a statement of Rava, who says that one who eats *matzah* after *chatzos* isn't *yotzei* the *Mitzvah* of *Matzah* according to Rebbi Elazar Ben Azaryah because there is a *hekesheh* between *Matzah* and *Korban Pesach*. This *hekesheh* connects *Matzah* to *Korban Pesach* so that they share the same deadline.

Now that we have the background in the timeline of the *Mitzvah* of *Matzah*, we need to understand what *afikomen* is accomplishing. There are two approaches in the *rishonim* in how to understand *afikomen*. Rashi and the Rashbam understand that the *ikkar Mitzvah* of *matzah* is fulfilled with the *afikomen* that is eaten at the end of the meal. The Rosh disagrees with this. He holds that the main *Mitzvah* of *Matzah* is performed by the *achilah rishona*, the first eating of *matzah* done at the beginning of the meal; and the *matzah* eaten for the *afikomen* is just a *zecher* to the *Korban Pesach*. However, whether it's just a *zecher* or the main *Mitzvah* of *Matzah*, the connection that exists between *Matzah* and *Korban Pesach* applies according to everyone even to *afikomen*, even according to the Rosh, because one could understand that a part of the *zecher* is the timing one has. Therefore, the *machlokes* between Rebbi Elazar Ben Azarya and Rebbi Akiva also effects *afikomen* according to everyone. Therefore, the *Shulchan (O"R 477:1)* writes that one should be careful to eat the *afikomen* before *chatzos*.

The *Avnei Nezer (O"R 281:5)* writes that if one is in the middle of the *seudah* and realizes that he won't be up to the *afikomen* by *chatzos*, one is able to eat *matzah* and make a *tenai* that if the *Halacha* is like Rebbi Elazar Ben Azaryah that the deadline for *Matzah* is until *chatzos*, the *matzah* that's eaten now should be for *afikomen* and one shouldn't eat until after *chatzos*. However, if the *Halacha* is like Rebbi Akiva, then the *matzah* later will be for *afikomen*. There are multiple assumptions that the *Avnei Nezer* seems to be making that could be point of argument:

- He seems to understand that you can't just be *machmir*, but you need to make the *tenai*. However, the *Pri Chadash* based on the Rosh writes that one should be *machmir*, be-

cause maybe Rebbi Akiva would also say on a *derabannan* level that you have until *chatzos* in order to prevent people from delaying to eat the korban pesach. The Avnei Nezer seems to understand the Shulchan Aruch as paskening like Rebbi Elazar Ben Azaryah, and you can't have this compromise that according to everyone there is a deadline of some sort until *chatzos*.

- He understands that the *Mitzvah* of *afikomen* nowadays is that at *chatzos* you have the taste of *matzah*, but after that there is no problem of eating

Rav Moshe Feinstein (*Igros Moshe, O" C Chelek 5 38:8*) addresses and argues on both assumptions. He first deals with the assumption that Rebbi Akiva can't be machmir on a *derabannan* level in order to distance oneself from *aveira*. He brings many proofs to show that it seems more right that according to Rebbi Akiva there **was** a *gezeira* that *Matzah* can only be eaten until *chatzos*. However, Rav Moshe tries to justify the Avnei Nezer by saying that maybe a *gezeirah* is only made for a *lav*. Therefore, the *gezeirah* might have existed during the time of the *Beis HaMikdash*, where there was a concern of Nossar. However, nowadays, where there is only a *kiyum ase*, the gezeirah no longer applies, because we aren't *gozeir* because of a *kiyum ase*, and the concern is very low that he'll forget to eat matzah on Pesach. However, Rav Moshe points out that even though one can answer for the Avnei Nezer, one shouldn't rely on it and extend his seuda. Rather, try to finish the *afikomen* before *chatzos*. He also deals with the second assumption of the Avnei Nezer, explaining that even according to Rebbi Elazar Ben Azaryah, who holds that the *Mitzvah* of *Matzah* ends at *chatzos*, the *chashivus hamitzvah* continues even past the actual *zman hamitzvah*. If that's true, then the *tenai* can't work, because the *issur achilah* after eating the *afikomen* will be in effect the entire night, and this has been the minhag for many generations in *klal yisrael*.

Rav Moshe's argument against the Avnei Neizer can teach us an important lesson as we enter *Pesach*. On *Pesach*, we have the opportunity to perform many *Mitzvos* that we don't get to do the rest of the year. *Pesach* gives us a chance to have an experience that we don't have every day of the year. Just like the *chashivus hamitzvah* of *korban pesach* lasts even after the actual time of the mitzvah, so too the experience we have as becoming the *Am Hashem* again through the symbols and the inspiration it creates should last us even further than just that *Seder* night.

**HALLEL****Hallel: A Disjointed Addition to the Seder***Gabriel Barber (23)*

*Hallel* seems to be a natural addition to the *Pesach seder*; the entire *chag* is, after all, focused on how *Hashem* saved us from slavery in *mitzrayim*, and praise is a sure way of appreciating any miracle. However, the method in which *hallel* is added to the *seder* contradicts the pattern of *hallel*'s implementation throughout the rest of the year.

First, *hallel* is usually recited during the day. As the *gemara* (*Megillah 20b*) explains: the entire day is available for *kerias hallel*. Why, then, do we say *hallel* during the *seder* night? Second, we normally say a *bracha* before *hallel*, but on the night of the *seder* we begin *hallel* suddenly, without any introductory *bracha*. Finally, *hallel* is generally said as a cohesive unit, as one long praise. However, on the Seder night, we split *hallel* into two parts: one part is said during the *maggid* portion of the *seder*, and the second half is said later, during the attributed time for *hallel*. Why is there this stark divide in our praise of *Hashem*? Why is *hallel* at the *seder* so different from the rest of the year?

Part of the answer to this question comes from understanding that *Pesach* is a unique holiday. *Pesach* represents our start as a nation and is a representation of the ultimate power of *Hashem* and His commitment to *B'nai Yisrael*. The *seder* is the time when we rejoice in our freedom and appreciate the *geulah* on a personal level. As the *gemara* in *Pesachim* states, a person must view themselves on the *seder* night as if they were leaving *mitzrayim* (*Pesachim 116b*). This requirement can help explain the oddities of the *hallel* at the *seder* night, because when a person is overjoyed or excited, there is an urgency to their praise and thanks that is normally absent. At the *seder*, we are in a state of elation; after all, we are supposed to feel as though we were just saved from a harsh 210-year enslavement. *Rav Hai Gaon*, as quoted by the *Ran* (26b *b'dapei ha'rif*), explains that because this *hallel* is sung as a song of happiness, we don't recite a *bracha* on it. This special *hallel* is such a spontaneous expression of joy that there is no time for a *bracha*! During the rest of the year, there is no urgency to our praise, we can afford the time to make a *bracha*. Similarly, since the miracle of *yetzias mitzrayim* occurred at night, we have no choice but to say this *hallel* at night in order to authentically encapsulate the feeling of the *geulah* at the *seder*. Ultimately, we incorporate *hallel* in unique ways at the *seder* in order to aid the atmosphere of redemption on *Pesach*.

However, we still have not answered the last question: why do we split the *hallel* into two parts? The *Abarbanel*, in his commentary *Zevach Pesach* on the *hagaddah*, answers this question by noting the clear thematic shift in the middle of *hallel*: while the *hallel* begins with us prais-

ing *Hashem* for the miracles He performed for us in the past, the end of *hallel* looks to our future redemption - the days of *mashiach*. These two sections of *hallel* fit perfectly into the locations of the *seder* in which they are placed. At the beginning of the *seder*, we look back and appreciate all the good that *Hashem* did for us in the past through His taking us out of *mitzrayim*, bringing us across the *yam suf*, and giving us the *Torah*. These reflections thematically correlate to the first half of *hallel*, so it seems appropriate to begin the *hallel* at this point in the *seder*. However, the end of *hallel* is clearly focused on the redemption of *B'nai Yisrael*, so it is more logical to place these praises and aspirations at the end of the *seder* when we open the door for *Eliyahu Ha'Navi* and *daven* for the final *geulah*.

Ultimately, the *seder* is a unique and surreal experience that truly encapsulates the feeling of our redemption from *mitzrayim*. And while it is crucial to personally feel that salvation, and burst into praise to *Hashem* because of that *yeshua*, it is equally important as the *seder* progresses to look to the future and *daven* for our ultimate *geulah*.

### ECHAD MI YODEA

### I Know Thirteen, Why Didn't You Ask?

*Sev Wiener (24)*

I heard in a *Shiur* by my Rebbi, Rav Shay Schachter, that at the *Seder* of his father, Rav Herschel Schachter, Rav Schachter would point out where one can find all 13 *Ikkarei HaEmunah* throughout the *Haggadah*. It is very clear that, based on the Rambam, these *Ikkarei HaEmunah* are the basics of Judaism. You would think that when it comes to *Echad Mi Yodea* we would mention them, considering the *Echad Mi Yodea* goes up until 13. But leaving that aside, the main question is what is the purpose of *Echad Mi Yodea*, it just seems to be a listing of different things that we know in Judaism, but why is this necessary? Furthermore, why is this placed all the way at the end of the *Haggadah*, shouldn't it be at the beginning, to show that we believe in *Hashem*, *Toras Moshe*, and all the other things that are mentioned in *Echad Mi Yodea*, and then tell the story how we got to that? Rav Avraham Schorr in his *Haggadah* gives a *ma-shal* that answers these questions. He says that in psychology there is such a thing called a Rorschach Test where a person is given a strange image of ink and the psychologist can figure out the personality of the person, based on the way the person describes what he sees in the image. Rav Schorr explains that when it comes to *Echad Mi Yodea* it is like a Rorschach Test. At the conclusion of the *Haggadah* and *Seder* night, we want to see what a person learned from the *Seder*. Therefore, we give him an "image," the numbers, and we see what you think of when you hear that number. Did you learn any lessons from the *Seder* or not? So

when you hear the #1 do you think of *Hashem* who did all the miracles from us when we took us out of *Mitzrayim* or are you still thinking of the one car or house you have, and same with the #2 and with all the numbers, and that's the purpose of having *Echad Mi Yodea*. As for the second question, why is this at the end? The idea is clear because we put it all the way at the end, so you have all of the *Seder* to learn from, and at the end, we test you to see what you learned. Regarding why throughout the entire *Haggadah* there is not a mention of the 13 *Ikkarei HaEmunah*, and even in *Echad Mi Yodea*, perhaps I can suggest an answer, similar to why we have *Echad Mi Yodea* as follows. The purpose of *Leil Haseder* is to strengthen our *Emunah* in *Hashem*, so we should be able on our own to recognize those core beliefs throughout the *Haggadah* so that we could get the most out of the *Haggadah*, and the Seder Night experience.

### CHAD GADYA

#### The Happy Ending to Seder Night

*Satan Gemal (23)*

Arguably the most exciting part of *Seder* night is “*Chad Gadya*,” the popular song we sing all the way at the end of the *seder*. This song describes a father's purchase of a kid (baby goat, not human) at the price of two *zuz*. The kid is then eaten by a cat, which is bitten by a dog, which is beaten by a stick, which is burned in a fire, which is put out with water, which is drunk by an ox, which is *shechted* by a butcher, who is killed by the *malach hamavet*, who is then destroyed in the big finale by none other than *Hashem*.

At first glance, this song seems rather mysterious and out of place - what does this sequence of events, which seems to highlight nothing more than a “circle of life,” have anything to do with the Jewish people, and more than that, what does it have to do with the *Pesach Seder*?

A simple and perhaps obvious answer is that *Hashem* is ultimately behind everything and more powerful than even the angel of death himself. The *Pesach Seder* is all about *Hashem* being the higher power, saving us from our enemies with a mighty hand no matter how harsh they are to the Jews, the little kid. But is there any more symbolism and deeper meaning behind this complex chain of characters?

The Vilna Gaon gives an insightful insight into this confusing song. Each step in *chad gadya* represents one step in the history of the Jewish people. The kid represents the birthright which Yaakov bought from Esav. The father who bought the kid is Yaakov, the one who bought the birthright. The *shnei zuzim* are the bread and stew used to buy the birthright, or the kid. The cat is the jealousy the *shevatim* had towards Yoseph, ultimately selling him as a slave. The dog is *Mitzrayim*, where Yoseph (the cat) was “bitten”. The stick is the staff of Moshe, which

fought back at the dog, bringing the 10 makkot. The fire is the evil *avodah zarah* which tormented the Jews for hundreds of years. The water represents the *chachamim* who finally rid the nation of *avodah zarah*. The ox represents Rome, who persecuted the Jews further. The butcher is Moshiach ben Yoseph, who will restore full Jewish sovereignty in *Eretz Yisrael*. The *malach hamavet* represents the death of Moshiach ben Yoseph, and finally Hashem arrives with Moshiach ben Dovid.

Given this explanation, we clearly see why “*Chad Gadya*” is at the conclusion of the *Seder*. By the end, we have spent hours discussing our history, all the ups and downs of our nation, and Hashem’s being behind the scenes all along. We conclude with “*Chad Gadya*” to essentially summarize and portray that although we have been through so many hardships, it will all have a happy ending when Hashem will escort Moshiach ben Dovid *bimheira biyameinu*.

**SHABBOS CHOL HAMOED & SHIR HASHIRIM**  
**You’re Sure You Found the Right Holiday?**

*Meir Morell (22)*

Every year on *Pesach*, either on *Shabbos Chol HaMoed*, or on the “last days” of *Pesach* (like this year), we have the *zechus* to read *Shir HaShirim*. We must ask, Why do we read *Shir HaShirim*, a story about a man and a woman’s love for one another? What relevance does it have to *Pesach*, a story about our redemption from slavery?

The earliest source that provides an explanation for reading any of the *megillos* on a particular *Yom Tov* is the *Machzor Vitry*. The *Machzor Vitry* explains that *Shir HaShirim* is read on *Pesach* because it was understood to hint to the redemption of the *Bnei Yisrael* from Egypt in 1:9, when it says “I have likened you, my darling, to a mare in Pharaoh’s chariots.” Additionally, many *pesukim* in *Shir HaShirim* are interpreted in *Shir HaShirim Rabbah* as referring to the Exodus. This is agreed upon by many, such the *Magen Avraham*, the *Biur HaGra*, the *Mishnah Berurah*.

In the introduction to his commentary on *Shir HaShirim*, Netziv argues that *Koheles* and *Shir HaShirim* are to be seen as inversely related. *Koheles*, he explains, was originally delivered on *Sukkos* before a large gathering of Jews and Non-Jews. Accordingly, its message, as a generic book of wisdom, was universal in scope. This is consistent with the themes of *Sukkos*, which is in many ways a universal holiday. (See Yisrael Dovid Rosenberg’s *Bendy Brambles and Brilliant Light: Chanukah’s Connection to Sukkos*, from *Shema Koleinu Chanukah Edition*) By contrast, *Shir HaShirim* was taught on *Pesach* in front of a Jewish crowd. Reading *Shir HaShirim* according to the classic midrashic interpretation that it is an allegory for the love between Hashem and the Jewish People,

Netziv explains that it was appropriate for Shlomo to teach *Shir HaShirim* to an exclusively Jewish audience on *Pesach*, a holiday whose themes are far more particularistic than those of *Sukkos*. This is the reason that we continue to read *Koheles* publicly on *Sukkos* and *Shir HaShirim* on *Pesach*.

Another, earlier source for *Shir HaShirim* having been taught on *Pesach* is found at the end of Rav Saadiah Gaon's introduction to his commentary to *Shir HaShirim*. He states there "and when Shlomo reigned and sat on his throne in the last days of *Pesach* he prophesized *Shir HaShirim*."

*Da'as Mikra* (p. 15) offers an alternative explanation for the association between *Shir HaShirim* and *Pesach*, noting that of all the holidays, *Pesach* is most closely associated with songs, including those sung at the *seder* and the Song at the Sea. Singing *Shir HaShirim* is a natural extension of *Pesach*'s motif of *shirah*.

Irrespective of whether or not you liked the answer of the *Machzor Vitry*, *Netziv*, *Da'as Mikra*, or any other opinion you've found, the fact that we read *Shir HaShirim* on *Pesach* can teach us quite the lesson. On a stressful *Yom Tov* like *Pesach*, it's sometimes hard to remember what you're here for. Our beloved *Shir HaShirim* comes and knocks (see 5:2) on the door of our consciousness and reminds us that the whole *Yom Tov*, and our whole lives for that matter, revolves around our close relationship with *Hashem*.

### SHEVI'Y SHEL PESACH

## Gathering When the Sea Split: The Reason Behind an Unusual Leil Shevi"i Shel Pesach Custom

*Meir Morell ('22)*

### **Introduction**

Every year, on the seventh night of *Pesach*, my father relates the following story. One of the times my father lived in Israel for a year, when he was learning in the Gruss *Kollel*, he was taken by a friend of his, Ariel Bareli (who has since then become the Rabbi of *Beit El*), late at night to an unusual gathering. It was the seventh night of *Pesach* and they were going to Rav Yosef Leib Zusman, a close *talmid* of Rav Yaakov Moshe Charlop. As it was the seventh night of *Pesach*, they were marking the crossing of the *Yam Suf* at *Chatzos*, which happened close to the time they gathered. Rav Zusman, following the *minhag* of his Rebbi, at the head of the table, would recite the *shiras hayam* verse by verse, from "vayosha" until then end of *az yashir*, responsively. Between each *passuk* they would sing a *niggun*. At the end, he would get up and go to the *amud*, and they sang a few lines from the next day's *mussaf* responsively, starting with "Melech Rachaman."

I have wondered for a long time where the source for all of this is, and I

finally did some research on the topic.

There's a very well researched and presented article in the monthly journal "*HaOtzar*" (edition 14, *Nissan* 5778) by Rabbi Shmuel Yismach of *Yeshivos Tzror HaMor* and *Hadar L'Hadar* which is quite critical of the practice, but is nonetheless thorough in its research, which has offered a few sources for the *minhag* to recite the *Shiras HaYam* at *Chatzos*. A few factors are necessary to establish before giving a reason for this *minhag*.

### **What Time Was *Kriyas Yam Suf*?**

The *pesukim* don't specify the exact time that the sea split, and are ambiguous as to what time the *Bnei Yisrael* sang *shirah*. One opinion (that of Rav Sa'adiah Gaon, Rabbeinu Bachya, the *Ohr HaChayim*, and others) is that *Kriyas Yam Suf* happened at the end of the night. That would also mean that, due to the time it took to travel through the *Yam Suf*, the *shirah* was sung at around midday. According to others (namely, Rashi, Ibn Ezra, the *Bechor Shor*, the *Chizkuni*, and others) the splitting preceded the last "*ashmores*"— the last watch of the night — which according to Rabbi Yismach is around *chatzos*. (Rabbi Yismach feels, however, that there is no real source for it having been exactly at *chatzos*, though it was right around it.) According to this opinion, the *shirah* was sung at some point later in the morning. Therefore, there isn't such a strong argument to sing *shirah* at *chatzos* since the *Bnei Yisrael* didn't sing it until later, as we'll discuss soon, though we now see why *chatzos* would be a possibility (though will discuss this a little more later). There really, however, is a better question.

### **Why Would One Think to Sing in the First Place?**

Many assume that the *minhag* of Rav Charlop stems from the *minhag* of "*Tikkun Leil Shvi'i Shel Pesach*". Rav Avraham Galanti, a *talmid* of Ramak, brings down that there's a *minhag* to get up at *chatzos* of the night and read from the "*Midrash VaYosha*" until the splitting of the sea. He then continues that there should be singing until the morning, along with *bakashos*, and at the end everyone stands up and sings "*B'Tzeis Yisrael*".

The *sefer Chemdas HaYamim* explains that one should learn *Torah* for the entire night and he gives a long list of all the things one should learn. He notes that the "*Chassidim HaRishonim*" had the custom to wait until the *ashmores haboker* to sing the *Shiras HaYam*. Rabbi Yismach assumes that Rav Charlop used the above sources to glean the inherent value of that time at night, and the value of marking the time through song, even if it wasn't exactly the same time.

We should all be *zocheh* to make the most of our *Leil Shvi'i Shel Pesach*, even if we don't stay up all night singing.

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From The Entire Shema Koleinu Team, Have a Wonderful Pesach!