

אוהל אברהם

A Journal of

דברי תורה

in Honor of

חג הפסח

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This edition of אוהל אברהם

is dedicated

in memory of

a wonderful husband and father

Benjamin M. Strauss A'H

בנימין מאיר בן נפתלי ע"ה

By

Claire Strauss and family

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צפורה בת אליעזר ע"ה

*in commemoration of her Yahrtzeit
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לאה בת רב ברוך אריה לייב ע"ה

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Toby and Philip Bardash  
and family*

## Editors' Note

We are pleased to present the second edition of the Beth Abraham Torah Journal - *Ohel Avraham*. This issue is dedicated to חג הפסח and relates to a broad range of halachic and aggadic topics that pertain to the חג. The articles, both in their creativity and their content, reflect our community's love and respect for Torah.

While we strive to engage in the discussion and exchange of Torah ideas at all times, חג הפסח is a unique time in our calendar for sharing Torah ideas in our homes and in our community. The Seder itself is an experience of informal Talmud Torah, with its mitzvah of והגדת לבנך and its explanations of the related *mitzvos ma'asiyot*. We hope that this Torah Journal will - by virtue of its content as well as the community wide commitment to Talmud Torah that it reflects - enhance all of our Sedarim and our yom tov in general.

Thank you to all of those who contributed articles to the journal and to those who generously sponsored this edition. A special thank you to Aaron Sheffey and Barry Finkelstein for their time and effort and editorial help.

Avie Schreiber

Seth Lebowitz

**A Message from the Rabbi**  
*Moreinu HaRav Yaakov Neuburger*

Once again we welcome the אוהל אברהם booklet as part of our yom tov preparations and celebrations. It speaks to the recognition that we all share, that through Torah study our yom tov and particularly our yom tov tables will be very much enhanced. Additionally it gives us the venue through which we can share ideas that have inspired our davening or given us a joyful “aha” moment. Most notably it adds a dimension to the Biblical mandate to make our holidays into “מקראי קודש” as explained by the Ramban. He understands it to refer to the holy ventures that bring people together and includes learning and davening together as a community.

I thank all those who took the time to contribute and am very grateful to Rabbi Avie Schreiber, Seth Lebowitz, Dr. Barry Finkelstein, and Aaron Sheffey for working on this project and seeing it to completion. We all know and appreciate how hard it is to find the time for communal projects, how daunting volunteering for communal work can be and how all consuming projects become before they are ready for the community. May Hashem bless them and their families with all the *berachos* that communal work can bring.

We are especially thankful to all of our sponsors who are singled out on the introductory pages. Their generosity and graciousness have made this project possible. In the merit of the Torah study and *simchas* yom tov generated by this booklet, may Hashem fulfill all of your prayers *letovah lyomim tovim va'aruchim*.

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## With Great Wealth - ברכוש גדול

Moreinu HaRav Yaakov Neuburger

The timing is striking and the message seems peculiar. He had just been banished from the presence of *Paroh* under the threat of death and, according to Rashi, Moshe stubbornly faces off with *Paroh* as Hashem is about to announce the final plague: *makas bechoros*. It was precisely at that moment that Hashem reveals to Moshe that He does not want His children to leave *Mitzrayim* as penniless slaves.

(שמות פרק יא פסוק ב) דבר נא באזני העם וישאלו איש מאת רעהו ואשה מאת רעותה כלי כסף וכלי זהב:

“Please speak to the nation that each man and woman must ask from their neighbor objects of silver and gold.” (*Shemos*, 11:2)

As strange as it seems to be concerned with gold and silver as we complete a miraculous redemptive course, this materialistic initiative has been an integral part of Hashem’s plan for us, ever since it was revealed to Avrohom at the *bris bain habisarim*:

(בראשית פרק טו, פסוקים יג-יד) ויאמר לאברם ידע תדע כי גר יהיה זרעך בארץ לא להם ועבדום וענו אתם ארבע מאות שנה: וגם את הגוי אשר יעבדו דן אנכי ואחרי כן יצאו ברכש גדול: “Hashem says to Avrohom: Know with certainty that your children will be strangers in a foreign land, and they will be forced to work and will be oppressed for four hundred years. And I will judge the nation that is enslaving them and afterward they will leave with great wealth.” (*Breishis* 15:13-14)

Are we to imagine that Avrohom takes some comfort in the promise of his children’s ultimate wealth? Would we in any way make peace with our children’s terrible suffering through the knowledge that they will gain fortunes when it is all over? If there is to be some solace in the dreadful news of descendants’ pain should it not be in the spiritual strength that will give it all some meaning?

To be sure, the significance of the “*rechush gadol*” is further underscored as it is represented as one of the “*simanim*” in the “*ma’aseh avos siman lebanim*” system of *sefer Bereishis*, about which the Ramban elaborates. Accordingly, Avrohom returns from *Mitzrayim* as a wealthy man to pave the way for his children who will leave with a *rechush gadol*. The fact that it was important enough to be part of the prophetic journey of Avrohom *Avinu*, begs us to consider it and attempt to understand its importance.

All of this culminates in Hashem's apparent anxiety to fulfill the good news of the covenant even as the bad came into being. That is why, according to *Chazal* quoted by Rashi, Hashem begins this request of Moshe with "please" as if to beg this generation to help Him maintain His integrity and assure Him that He will not disappoint Avrohom *Avinu*.

Surely we must be troubled by what seems to be confusing the moments of our national birth with the pursuit of material gain from our oppressors?

Interestingly, Moshe as he stood in front of *Paroh*, scolded and imperiled, and now hearing about the *rechush gadol* mission, may have wondered whether the Egyptians would share their wealth with their Israelite enemies. Perhaps that is why Hashem immediately continues with the details of His plan, all of which will begin to shed some light on the purpose of the "*rechush gadol*":

(שמות פרק יא פסוק ג) ויתן ה' את חן העם בעיני מצרים גם האיש משה גדול מאד בארץ מצרים  
בעיני עבדי פרעה ובעיני העם:

"Hashem made the Jews find favor in the eyes of the Egyptians. Moreover, Moshe was held in great esteem in the Land of Egypt and in the opinion of the servants of *Paroh* and in the opinion of the Egyptians" (11:3)

Whereas we would have expected the Egyptians to entirely dismiss us as lowly slaves who were bringing upon them unprecedented and unceasing curses, Hashem assured that the opposite actually took place. With Hashem's intervention, they found us altogether charming and Moshe was off the charts!! Not to be believed? Watch how the Egyptians would freely and willingly give of their property to the Jews. The flow of the *pesukim* would suggest that through this exercise the Jews would come to learn of the respect the Egyptians accorded them.

Indeed, when asking for the gold and silver, our forefathers were to learn an age old truism: We will earn goodwill and respect when we act as courageous Jews and carry Hashem's blessings as rightful and deserving owners. In those circumstances Hashem will become known to all and revered by all both through our behavior and subsequently through the blessings that He showers upon us.

Thus our redemption was not confused by greed or by materialism, but rather through the *rechush gadol*, an historic moment was charged with outreach and mission.

This was by no means the first time that our position amongst our neighbors took on great significance. In fact, this too brings us back to Avrohom *Avinu*. In a

narrative unusually rich in detail describing his efforts to secure a grave for Sarah, we read of every conversation and of every move that Avrohom made. The Ramban, wanting us to be alert to the messages of the details of any narrative, explains that these conversations are recorded for us in order to see the genuine respect that Avrohom had achieved. He is welcomed as “*nesi elokim*”, a prince of G-d. His behaviors, words and accomplishments are watched carefully and are thus positioned to communicate Hashem’s presence, values and wishes.

Earlier in Avrohom’s life, when his nascent career brought him back from *Mitzrayim* to Israel, the Torah emphasizes that he revisited all the places that hosted him on his flight from famine to Egypt. According to Rashi, he left as a poor man and was now repaying the credit that had been extended to him. Unwilling to accept that the repayment of debt is worthy of being recorded as it should be self understood, many *darshanim* explain this detail much more dramatically.

They suggest that the Avrohom who descended to *Mitzrayim* was perceived as abandoned by the G-d about whom he came to teach and terribly dependent on the people he came to inspire. Yet on his return, Avrohom, now a man of means, would revisit his doubters and skeptics. This was not about shallow triumphalism but about teaching faith, trust and patience.

Thus the *rechush gadol* was the prophetic promise to Avrohom that his children would leave *Mitzrayim* empowered to teach about Hashem’s presence and protection, about His demands and directions. The *rechush gadol* similarly signaled to us as we left *Mitzrayim* that we are a people who were and will be appreciated for our beliefs and behaviors and perhaps even envied for our faith and ideals. It is, no doubt, for the purpose of building on that knowledge that you and I were redeemed.

## My Great-Grandfather's *Drasha L'Shabbos Ha'Gadol*

Yossi Markovitz

The following *drasha* is recorded in *Even Yaakov*, one of many *seforim* written by my mother's paternal grandfather, Rabbi Yakov Meskin Z"L<sup>1</sup>:

The *Tur* (*Orach Chaim* 430) discusses the reason that the *Shabbat* before *Pesach* is referred to as *Shabbat HaGadol*. He cites the *Gemara Shabbat* (87a) which records that the exodus from Egypt took place on a Thursday. On the tenth day of *Nissan* (which was *Shabbat*) the Jewish people took lambs for their *Korban Pesach* and tied them to their bed posts. When the Egyptians questioned their actions, the Jews responded that they were sacrificing the lambs to Hashem. The *Tur* points out the great *Kiddush Hashem* that Bnai Yisrael achieved through this, since the lambs were considered gods to the Egyptians and slaughtering them could have caused a fatal backlash upon the Jewish people.

Two questions may be directed at the *Tur's* explanation.

1. First, the *Beit Yosef* asks, why isn't *Shabbat HaGadol* commemorated as the calendric tenth day of *Nissan*, rather than as the *Shabbat* before *Pesach*? The

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### 1. Brief biography of Rabbi Yakov HaCohen Meskin:

*Rabbi Meskin was born in Vilkamir (Kovna), Lithuania in 1884. His family moved to Ponovich when he was 13, and at age 14 he travelled from there to study in the great Yeshiva of Slobodka under Rav Yitzchak Yaakov Rabinovitz and Rav M.M. Epstein. Upon returning to Ponovich, he served in the Beit Din of Rav Itzile Ponovicher. In 1914, he became the Rav of Nava Praga in Russia where he stayed for 11 years. After the rise of the Soviets, he returned to Ponovich and befriended the Rosh Yeshuva, Rav Yosef Shlomo Kahaneman.*

*In 1925, Rabbi Meskin travelled to the United States and became the Rabbi of a shul in Burlington, Vermont where he served until 1931. A year later he became the Rav of Congregation Nusach Sfarad V' Taharas Hamishpocha in Bronx, New York where he served for 24 years.*

*Rabbi Meskin passed away in 1956. His legacy includes 9 books of Chidushei Torah and Responsa including Even Yakov, Beit Yakov, Sulam Yakov, Makel Yakov, Mishpat L'Yakov, and Hadras Mordechai.*

*Based on the biography of Litvisher heritage described above, it is clear that all pronunciations in Havara Sfaradit are my own and do not reflect the way the Alter Zeide would have spoken.*

fact that this performance fell out on Shabbat seems to be circumstantial but not relevant to the story.

2. The second question is more subtle. Prior to *Matan Torah* one could easily assume that the Jewish nation held the halachic status of *Bnai Noach* (non-Jews), and, according to the *Rambam* (*Hilchot Melachim* 10:23) a *Ben Noach* is not commanded in *Kiddush Hashem* [That is, they are not required sacrifice their lives in adherence of specific prohibitions involving murder, sexual misconduct, foreign worship, as well as situations where the sole purpose of the persecutor is to have the Jew transgress halacha.] Therefore, when faced with a predicament of life or death, *Bnai Yisrael* should have chosen to refrain from such a dangerous task. Furthermore, according to the *Rambam*, in a situation where one is not required to sacrifice himself rather than transgress, to do so would be considered suicide.

In answering these questions, Rabbi Meskin quotes the *Parshat Derachim* (of the *Mishne L'Melech*) which cites a *Midrash* in *Parshat Lech Lecha*. Avraham Avinu asks Hashem, "Ba'ma Eida Ki Irashena?" Avraham inquires as to which merit will cause him to inherit the Land of Canaan. Rabbi Meskin, furthermore, quotes a *Gemara* in *Baba Batra* (10a) that says:

*Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai* questioned his disciples as to the meaning of the verse (*Mishlei* 14:34): "*Tzedaka exalts a people; but the disgrace of nations is sin.*" And R. Eliezer answered: "*Tzedaka exalts a people*" means Israel, and "*the disgrace of nations is sin*" refers to all of the *tzedaka* and kindness of the nations; if indulgence in them is only for the purpose of becoming great or gaining a good name, it is a sin for them.

Using this *Midrash* to elucidate the story, Rabbi Meskin explains that earlier in his life, Avraham was fearful to allow himself to be thrown into the *Kivshan Ha'esh* at the hands of Nimrod. Had he made a wrong calculation? If he was considered a *Ben Noach*, was he entitled to risk his life for a *Kiddush Hashem*? However, when he emerged from the fiery furnace unscathed he understood that he was not considered a *Ben Noach* and had every right to sacrifice himself for the sake of *Kiddush Hashem*.

Avraham then proceeds to ask Hashem a different question, pertaining to *Tzedaka*. Based on the aforementioned *Gemara*, only a Jew is allowed to perform a charitable deed (*al m'nat*) in order to merit a reward; however, for a *Ben Noach* to do so would be a violation. However, since Avraham was confident in his status as a *Yisrael* he asked Hashem, "For which act of *Tzedaka* will I merit the Land?"

Based on this insight we can answer the second question on the *Tur*. *Bnai Yisrael* indeed were allowed to risk their lives to perform a Mitzvah during the era of Egyptian persecution. They had the status of *Yisraelim*, not *Bnai Noach*.

In the same vein, we can understand a Midrash in Parshat Shmot which tells us that Moshe established Shabbat as a day of rest for the Jewish slaves (a decree that was later revoked by *Paroh*). One might ask, if the Jews indeed had the status of *Bnai Noach* how could Moshe establish Shabbat for them as a day of rest? Certainly we know the rule in Gemara *Sanhedrin* (48b) that a *Ben Noach* who observes Shabbat deserves to be killed! Obviously, Moshe was not only utilizing Shabbat to give the slaves a much needed break, but also as a tool to reveal to the nation their true status as *Yisraelim*.

With this in mind, we can also answer the first question on the *Tur*, posed by the *Beit Yosef*. The day of Shabbat was indeed relevant to the story of Shabbat HaGadol. The presence of Shabbat is what elucidated to the Jewish slaves that they were in fact *Bnai Yisrael*. It enabled them to fearlessly risk their lives in performance of *Mitzvat Korban Pesach Al Kiddush Hashem*. And in the merit of *Korban Pesach*, the Jewish people were redeemed from their physical and spiritual Egyptian bondage. That is why we connect its commemoration to the day of Shabbat and not simply to the tenth day of Nissan.

May we soon merit to celebrate the holiday of Pesach in Yerushalayim.

# Freedom<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Sam Friedman

The Haggadah tells us that when the Jews left Egypt, they went “מעבדות לחרות” - from slavery to freedom.” Rabbi Moshe Green, in his book entitled *Impressions on the Heart*, which was culled from the thoughts of Rabbi Shlomo Freifeld, זצ”ל (1923-1988, beloved teacher and founder of Yeshiva Sh`or Yoshuv), discusses the concept of freedom as it exists in American society, and compares it to the Torah`s understanding of freedom.

Freedom in American society can be described as “the free reign to do as one pleases...as long as one doesn`t hurt anybody.” The history of American society has shown that this can lead to all sorts of problems. For instance, as Rabbi Freifeld and Rabbi Green ask: "Is a drug addict who has open access to heroin a free man? Is a child that is allowed to run wild better off than the child who has parents that do not allow such behavior?"

Rabbi Freifeld and Rabbi Green explain:

Freedom requires form. One must have definitions of what is positive, decent, and moral...Only with principles...to channel behavior...can the benefits of freedom be reaped...The Torah is the "owner`s manual" for life. The Sages are teaching us that *freedom starts with humbling oneself to the awesome clarity and depth of the Torah*. Only within its four walls can the human spirit soar...Without real and concrete guidelines...freedom becomes meaningless...As it states in *Pirkei Avos* 6:2, "One cannot be a free man unless he immerses himself in the Torah."

To be truly free, one needs the framework provided by the Torah. "License to do whatever one wants, whenever one wants, makes one a slave to his base desires rather than securing liberty." Without the guidance of the Torah, one is not free at all.

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1. This essay was originally published in Dr. Friedman`s sefer on Chumash, Joyous Torah Treasures.

# ***Hakaras Hatov as the Theme of Yetzias Mitzrayim***<sup>1</sup>

Yechiel & Tzvi Rotblat

## Introduction

One of the recurring themes in the events of יציאת מצרים is *Hakaras Hatov*. In this essay I would like to (1) identify a number of incidents in the events of יציאת מצרים that contain elements of *Hakaras Hatov*, (2) explain why *Hakaras Hatov*, of all the *midos*, is so integral to יציאת מצרים and *Emunah* in general and (3) present two practical applications of the foregoing.

## Outline

### A. Examples of *Hakaras Hatov*

1. Yisro's Daughters
2. Moshe and Yisro
3. The First Three Plagues
4. פֶּטֶר חָמוֹר
5. לְקַלֵּב תִּשְׁלַכְוּ אֹתוֹ
6. Appreciation to the Egyptians

### B. *Hakaras Hatov* as a Building Block of *Emunah*

### C. To Thank is to Admit

### D. *Kefias Tov*

### E. Honor Your Father and Mother

### F. Practical Ramifications

1. אֲרָמֵי אֲבֹד אָבִי
2. יציאת מצרים בגלילות

## **A. Examples of *Hakaras Hatov***

### 1. Yisro's Daughters

When Moshe fled Egypt, he escaped to Midyan and met Yisro's daughters at the well. After he assisted them in drawing water from the well, the daughters returned home earlier than usual and reported to their father that an "איש מצרי" had saved them<sup>2</sup>. The simplest explanation is that Moshe, having recently arrived from Egypt, was probably wearing Egyptian clothing, and he was the איש מצרי to whom they were referring.

The Midrash Rabbah<sup>3</sup>, however, takes another approach and offers the following parable. A man was bitten by a venomous snake and ran to the river to heal his

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1. This article is based on an essay written by Rabbi Chaim Friedlander in the *sefer Sifsei Chaim-Moadim*, volume 2.

2. *Shemos* 2:19

3. *Shemos Rabbah* 1:32

wound. Upon arriving at the river he came across a drowning child whom he then rescued. When praised for his heroism the man replied “I did not save you, it was the snake, for if not for the snake I would never have been here.” Likewise, when Yisro’s daughters told their father that an איש מצרי saved them, it was because that is what Moshe had told them – “that Egyptian officer that I smote, he is the one who saved you.” For it was due to the Egyptian slave driver that Moshe was forced to flee to Midyan and therefore arrived at the well just in time to assist Yisro’s daughters.<sup>4</sup>

According to this interpretation of the Midrash, Moshe is showing gratitude to the Egyptian slave driver, albeit for the unforeseen consequences of his actions.

## 2. Moshe and Yisro

In *Parshas Shemos*, after Moshe came upon the burning bush, G-d told Moshe to return to Egypt to rescue the Jews. In the following *p’sukim*<sup>5</sup>, we are told the very first thing that Moshe did was to inform his father-in-law of his intentions to go back to Egypt. The *Midrash Rabbah* explains<sup>6</sup> that Moshe actually told G-d that he could not go back to Egypt because Yisro had opened his home to him and Moshe was indebted to him. This is striking because the very same Midrash tells us on the *posuk* לו קראנו את-האיש, קראנו לו “ויאמר אל-בנותיו, ואני; למה זה עזבתו את-האיש, קראנו לו ויאכל לחם” - that Yisro’s invitation was self-serving in that he hoped that Moshe would marry one of his daughters.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, Moshe felt that because of the hospitality provided to him and the gratitude he owed Yisro, he put his mission from G-d on temporary hold until he received permission from Yisro to leave.

## 3. The First Three Plagues

In *Shemos Perek* 8, Hashem instructs Moshe to tell Aharon to take the staff and strike the river or the sand in order to start the plague of the blood, the plague of frogs and the plague of lice. The *Midrash Rabbah*<sup>8</sup> quotes R’ Tanchum who explains that since Moshe had been rescued by the river when he was a baby and later protected by the sand when he struck the Egyptian slave driver, it was inappropriate for Moshe to strike the water or the sand. Although the idea of

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4. It is likely that the *Midrash Rabbah* takes this approach due to the fact that the only other reference to an איש מצרי in the entire parsha is 8 psukim earlier in the verse that describes slave driver that Moshe struck--now the cause for this flight.

5. *Shemos* 4:18. וילך משה וישב אל-יתר חתנו, ויאמר לו אלכה נא ונאשובה אל-אחי אשר-במצרים, לא קשלום. ואראה, העודם חיים; ויאמר יתרו למשה, לך קשלום.

6. *Shemos Rabbah* 4:2

7. *Shemos Rabbah* 1:32

8. *Shemos Rabbah* 9:10

expressing *Hakaras Hatov* to an inanimate object is seemingly bizarre, we nevertheless see another instance of *Hakaras Hatov* in the events of יציאת מצרים.<sup>9</sup>

#### 4. פטר חמר

There is a mitzvah to give the first born of every kosher animal to a Kohen. In addition, the Torah states that there is a mitzvah to redeem the first born of one non-kosher animal as well, the first born of the donkey. As the posuk states “וְכָל-פֶּטֶר חֲמֹר תִּפְדֶּה בְּשֵׂה, וְאִם-לֹא תִפְדֶּה וְעִרְפְּתוּ; וְכָל בְּכוֹר אֲדָם בְּבִנְיָהּ, תִּפְדֶּה.”<sup>10</sup> The donkey is to be redeemed for a lamb and the lamb is given to the Kohen. In fact, the first chapter of *Meseches B'choros* is dedicated to the discussion of this mitzvah. According to Chazal, the donkey was given this special status in Halacha in recognition of the role that it played in carrying the Jews and their baggage out of Egypt.<sup>11</sup>

#### 5. לְכָלֵב תִּשְׁלַחֵן אֹתוֹ

In describing the law that it is permissible to derive benefit (other than eating) from the meat of a carcass or an improperly slaughtered animal, the Torah relays this by stating that such meat “shall be cast to the dogs.” As the *posuk* states “וְאִנְשֵׁי-קֹדֶשׁ, תִּהְיוּ לִי; וּבָשָׂר בְּשָׂדֶה כִּרְפָה לֹא תֹאכְלוּ, לְכָלֵב תִּשְׁלַחֵן אֹתוֹ.”<sup>12</sup> Rather than simply stating that it is permissible to derive benefit from such meat, the Torah specifically uses this analogy to teach us that G-d does not withhold the reward of any creature, and the dogs were due their reward because of their silence on the evening of יציאת מצרים.<sup>13</sup> As the *posuk* states “וְלֹכֵל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, לֹא יִחַרְץ-כֶּלֶב לִישְׁנוֹ.”<sup>14</sup>

#### 6. Appreciation to the Egyptians.

What is most astounding is the recognition that the Torah gives to the Egyptians themselves. Despite all the misery that the Egyptians caused the Jews, there are

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9. Many commentators have sought to explain the notion of expressing gratitude to an inanimate object. Two explanations of note are as follows:

(a) G-d was teaching Moshe, and in turn the Jewish people, that if even inanimate objects are worthy of gratitude and appreciation, how much more so are fellow humans.

(b) One's responsibility to express gratitude is not necessarily dependant solely on the intent or effort of the benefactor. Rather, appreciation is due even if the benefit delivered was unintended. This is consistent with our recognition that the true source of all the good we receive is from Hashem and all intermediaries are merely His messengers, in which case the intent of the intermediary is really not relevant.

10. *Shemos* 13:13

11. Rashi, *Shemos* 13:13

12. *Shemos* 22:30

13. *Mechilta*, as quoted by Rashi, *Shemos* 22:30

14. *Shemos* 11:7

at least two places in the Torah that express appreciation to the Egyptians for being our hosts for over 200 years.

First, parshas *בְּשַׁלַּח* begins, “וַיְהִי, בְּשַׁלַּח פָּרְעֹה אֶת-הָעָם,” and it was when Pharaoh sent the people away.” Why does the Torah credit Pharaoh with sending out the Jews? We specifically state in the Haggada and elsewhere that G-d did not even allow a single angel to assist him in taking the Jews out of Egypt. Rather G-d acted alone. So how do we reconcile this with the *posuk* in the very beginning of parshas *בְּשַׁלַּח*? Rav Druck in the *sefer Drash Mordechai*<sup>15</sup> explains that even though Pharaoh was the villain, we still lived in his country for over 200 years and therefore the Torah grants him this small measure of recognition.

Second, we find in parshat *Ki Seitze*, “לֹא-תִתְעַב מִצָּרִי, כִּי-גֵר הָיִיתָ בְּאֶרֶצוֹ.” You shall not abhor an Egyptian, because you were a stranger in his land.<sup>16</sup>

### **B. *Hakaras Hatov* as a Building Block of Emunah**

In the *sefer Sifsei Chaim*, Rabbi Chaim Friedlander explains that the foundation of *kabalas ol malchus shamayim* - acceptance of the yoke of heaven - is rooted in the principle of *Hakaras Hatov*-expressing our debt of gratitude to Hashem for all His kindness to us in general, and for the miracles that He performed for the nation of Israel throughout history. The miracles of *יְצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם* in particular, which brought us directly to the slope of Mt. Sinai, were directed at engendering feelings of immense gratitude amongst Bnei Yisrael, and as such were a direct stimulus to acceptance of the Torah. As the *posuk* says, “וַיֹּאמֶר, כִּי-אֶהְיֶה עִמָּךְ, וְיָזָה-לְךָ הָאוֹר, כִּי אֲנֹכִי שְׁלַחְתִּיךָ: בְּהוֹצִיאֲךָ אֶת-הָעָם, מִמִּצְרַיִם, תַּעֲבֹדוּן אֶת-הָאֱלֹהִים, עַל הַהָר הַזֶּה.” So we see that the express and immediate purpose of *יְצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם* – and the miracles performed in connection therewith-was the acceptance of yoke of heaven and the commandments of the Torah.

Likewise, regarding the first of the ten commandments, “אֲנֹכִי ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ, אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עַבְדִּים”<sup>17</sup> the Ibn Ezra writes that *יְצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם* and the *Hakaras Hatov* that emanates from it, are what is “*mechayev es kiyum hamitzvos*” i.e, is the source of the obligation for an individual to keep the rest of the mitzvos.

Now that we understand the fundamental role of *Hakaras Hatov* as a basic building block of our faith, and the role that *יְצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם* plays as one of the major events that engenders those feelings of *Hakaras Hatov*, we can also understand why so there are so many acts of *Hakaras Hatov* embedded in the

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15. *Sefer Drash Mordechai, Breishis*, page 33

16. *Devorim*, 23:8.

17. *Shemos*, 20:2

events of *יצאת מצרים* and why so many of the precepts that memorialize the events of *יצאת מצרים* are based on the principles of *Hakaras Hatov*.

### C. To Thank is to Admit

Interestingly, in Hebrew the word “to thank” and the Hebrew word “to admit” share the same root *hey, daled, hey*. This is because in order to thank another, one must first be humble enough to admit his deficiency and dependence. So, for example, when we say *modeh ani lefanecha* when we awake each morning, we are saying thank you, but we are also admitting that Hashem is the One that has returned our soul to us. Likewise in *shmona esre*, *modim anachnu lach*, we are expressing our thanks, but we are also admitting our dependence on Hashem.<sup>18</sup>

### D. Kefias Tov

The *Mishnas Rabbi Eliezer* states that one who is a *Kofe B'Tov* (denies good) is punished more severely than one with other negative character traits because *Kofe B'Tov* is a form of denying the existence of G-d. At first glance this appears rather harsh. However, based on the explanations given above, we can understand that the ability to appreciate the goodness of Hashem is a primary means of being drawn closer to Hashem and accepting the yoke of Heaven. Accordingly, one who is so haughty that he is unable to recognize and appreciate the kindness of his friends will never be able to appreciate the kindness of Hashem. For this reason he is treated as one who will eventually deny the existence of G-d.

This understanding sheds interesting light on the character of Pharaoh. The posuk says "וַיִּקְרָם מֶלֶךְ-הַדָּשׁ, עַל-מִצְרַיִם, אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יָדַע, אֶת-יְיֹסֵף".<sup>19</sup> The *Mishnas Rabbi Eliezer* explains that it is unlikely that Pharaoh, even if he was actually a new king, didn't at least hear about Yosef. Rather, Pharaoh perceived it as a weakness to admit his country's reliance and dependence on a foreigner. Pharaoh was a *Kofe B'Tov*, and as we know, eventually denied the existence of G-d as well.

This also explains how Pharaoh was so stubborn in the face of such obvious miracles. In fact Pharaoh himself in the later miracles recognizes the hand of Hashem, but then reverses himself after the plagues are over.<sup>20</sup> Perhaps it was this sense of arrogance that made Pharaoh so stubborn that he was unable to acknowledge the revealed hand of G-d in the miracles performed in Egypt.

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18. The Hebrew term for the Jewish people, *Yehudim*, comes from the name Yehudah which means “gratitude” or “grateful.” As Leah stated when she named her son Judah, הַפְעַם אֶרְדָּה אֶת ה'.

19. *Shemos* 1:8

20. *Shemos* 10:20

## E. Honor Your Father and Mother

The principles described above also provide a nice explanation for why the commandment of *וְאֶת-אִמְךָ, וְאֶת-אָבִיךָ*, appears among the first five of the Ten Commandments, which are generally all commandments between man and G-d. We can now understand that the mitzvah to honor one's parents, which in its very essence is rooted in principles of *Hakaras Hatov*, is not only a commandment regarding the character trait that one must have in dealing with one's parents and fellow mankind, but also is a character trait that is essential for fulfilling all of the commandments. For this reason it appropriately belongs in the first five of the Ten Commandments (yet it is the last of the five, so it sets the transition to the latter five that are between fellow men).

## F. Practical Ramifications

The role of *Hakaras Hatov* as a fundamental theme in *יְצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם* is not only theological, but also has practical applications in the way we perform a number of mitzvos. Two such examples are as follows:

### 1. אֲרָמִי אֲבָד אֲבִי

On the seder night we recall the events that occurred in Egypt by reading and expounding the verses in the segment of "וְיָרַד מִצְרַיִמָה, וַיֵּרָר שָׁם בְּמַתִּי" "מֵעֵט וְיָהִי-שָׁם, לְגוֹי גְדוֹל עָצוּם וְרַב" from *parshas* *כי-תבוא*<sup>21</sup>. This is also the portion that one reads when bringing his *bikurim* -the first fruits-to the Temple. Oddly, we do not read from the Torah portions of *Va'eyra*, *Bo* or *Beshalach*, the portions in which the actual events took place. However, now that we have identified *Hakaras Hatov* as a central theme in *יְצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם*, it is quite appropriate that the *parsha* of *bikurim*, which itself is all about thanking G-d for the bounty He has bestowed upon us, is the *parsha* that we use to expound upon at the seder.

### 2. יְצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם בְּלֵילוֹת

The Rambam in *Hilchos Krias Shema* states that there is a daily obligation to recollect *יְצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם*. However, in the *Sefer Hamitzvos*, where the Rambam lists all of the 613 mitzvos, he does not list this as a separate mitzva. Rabbi Yosef Dov Soleveitchik quotes his grandfather Rav Chaim Soleveitchik<sup>22</sup> as saying that the reason why this is not counted in the *Sefer Hamitzvos* is because of a technicality, namely, the Rambam only counts mitzvos that are eternal. The well known mishna in *Meseches Brachos*, which is also quoted in the Haggada, states "אָמַר לָהֶם רַבִּי אֱלֵעָזָר בֶּן עֲזַרְיָה, הֲרִי אֲנִי כָּבֹן שְׁבָעִים שָׁנָה, וְלֹא זָכִיתִי שֶׁתֹּאמַר יְצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם בְּלֵילוֹת, עַד שֶׁדָּרְשָׁה בֶן זֹמְנָא: שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר "לְמַעַן תִּזְכֹּר אֶת-יְיָ צִאתְךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם, כָּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ"

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21. *Devorim* 26:1

22. *Shiurim L'zecher Aba Mori*, Vol I.

(דברים טו,ג)--"ימי תייד", הימים; "כל ימי תייד", תלילות. וְחַכְמִים אֹמְרִים "ימי תייד", העולם הזה; "כל ימי תייד", להביא את מות המשיח

Ben Zoma and the Sages disagree about the extra word "כל" in the verse "למען" "תזכר את-יום צאתך מארץ מצרים, כל ימי תייד". So that you shall remember the day of your exodus all of the days of your life." The sages said that the word כל teaches us that remembering יציאת מצרים applies even in the times of Moshiach, while Ben Zoma said it teaches us that remembering יציאת מצרים applies in the evenings. We accept Ben Zoma's approach and therefore recite the third parsha of *krias shema* the evenings. Presumably, we reject the position of the Sages, which means that the mitzvah of remembering יציאת מצרים is not eternal, as it does not apply in the times of Moshiach. For this reason, the Rambam did not count it in the *Sefer Hamitzvos*.

Rav Isser Zalman Meltzer<sup>23</sup> explains that the Sages are not of the position that the mitzvah to remember יציאת מצרים will be revoked in the days of Moshiach. Rather, the underlying reason for the mitzvah of remembering יציאת מצרים is so that this chapter in our history will serve as a basis of our belief and engender the spirit of *Hakaras Hatov* that will draw us closer to Hashem. In the days of Moshiach, however, there will be a new salvation that will serve that purpose. There will be a different manifestation of Hashem's might and kindness – and we will then be using those events as the basis for expressing our gratitude for His salvation.

May we all merit to see this salvation, *b'mheira b'yameinu amen*.

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23. *Even Ha'azel, Hilchos Kerias Shema*, Chapter 1:6



Yosef and his entire generation died and a new generation had begun to sprout. In addition, a new king was in power. *Perek 1 pasuk 8* tells us וַיָּקָם מֶלֶךְ-חָדָשׁ וַיִּזְכֹּר יוֹסֵף עַל-מִצְרַיִם אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יָדָע אֶת-יְהוֹסֵף. “A new king came to power who did not know who Yosef was”. Rashi comments on the phrase “אשר לא ידע” עשה עצמו כאילו לא-אשר לא ידע. Pharaoh made it seem like he did not know who Yosef was, but in reality he knew very well who Yosef was and what Yosef represented. The Gemara in *Sotah (daf 11)* explains that there is a *machlokes* between Rav and Shmuel concerning the new king that took power. Rav says that we should take the Torah literally and understand that a new king came to power. Shmuel says that a new physical king did not come to power but rather the same king renewed his decrees and changed his views. He was the same Pharaoh who had worked all of these years side by side with Yosef. According to either of these views, Rashi is pointing out that Pharaoh knew who Yosef was and what he represented. Without Yosef, Pharaoh’s entire country of *Mitzrayim* would have been lost to famine. The king and his entire country owed everything to Yosef. This thinking however contradicted his new way of thinking. With the knowledge of what Yosef meant to the country and that without the Jews his country would not have been where it was presently, it becomes inconceivable to enslave the Jews. Pharaoh has to make it seem that he doesn’t know who Yosef is and what he means to his country. This is the only way he can rationalize enslaving the Jews.

When Pharaoh's fortunetellers told him that the savior of the Jews was born on that day, and that they were unsure if he was a *Mitzri* or an *Ivri*, Pharaoh realized the strong possibility that it could be a *Mitzri*. Perhaps a *Mitzri* boy would grow up and learn the history of his country. His parents would teach him about the terrible years of famine and about a Jew named Yosef who was able to devise a system that would ultimately save the country. Perhaps this *Mitzri* boy would realize exactly what Pharaoh realized but wouldn't admit - that without Yosef, “I would not be there today.” And this *Mitzri's* thought process would continue - “without Yosef *Ha'Ivri* our country would have been destroyed by famine. How can I sit here today when these Jews are enslaved and tortured? How can I sit here idly and not react? I need to start a revolution to save the Jews. If not for them, I would not be here. Something must be done.” This is what Pharaoh was afraid of. This kind of thinking would go against everything he was trying to accomplish. The only way to ensure that the Jews would never be saved is to kill both the *Mitzri* and *Ivri* babies alike.

The lesson learned from this is one that carries throughout our Seder night. The theme of *hakaras hatov* - being thankful to *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* for everything that we have - is symbolized by the *mitzvos halaila*. If Pharaoh was concerned about a *Mitzri* learning about his history and perhaps risking his life to save another nation, how much more appreciative do we have to be to our Savior for allowing us to live the lives that we do. From the beginning of the seder with *Ha Lach Ma'anya* through the eating of the matzah, marror and drinking of the *arba*

*kosos* a focus of the night is appreciating the transition that we made as a nation from *avdus* to *chairus*, from slavery to freedom. We appreciate the details by eating matzah and marror, which symbolize the slavery, and by drinking the wine, which symbolizes the transition to freedom.

Unfortunately, as we are well aware, the main theme of the night is missing as we have no *Korban Pesach*. Although not physically present, the *halachos* of the *korban* go hand in hand with the theme of appreciating the transition from *avdus* to *chairus*. There is a very interesting opinion of the Sha'agas Aryeh, quoted by Rav Zevin, that says that there is a separate mitzvah to eat the entire *korban pesach* and to ensure that nothing is left over. He specifically says that this is not related to the halacha of *nosar* which says that if there is left over it must be burned. In addition to the core mitzvah of eating one *kezayis* of the *korban*, there is an additional *mitzvas asai* to eat the entire *korban*. No explanation for the significance is given. Perhaps we can suggest that the reason lies with appreciating the transition from slavery to freedom and having the same *hakaras hatov* we mentioned above. When a slave is working for his master, he has no voice in what he can and cannot do. His master decides what he does and when he does it. In addition, a master decides what he eats, when he eats and how much he eats. The slave has no independent decisions to make. Many of us have come in contact with Holocaust survivors who have lived their lives without wasting a morsel of food. They won't tolerate throwing out food or wasting food. They appreciate what they have now because they remember the times when they did not have it at all. They remember a time when they were told when to eat and how much they could eat. Eating every piece of the *korban pesach* physically symbolizes the transition from *avdus* to *chairus*, while giving us the appreciation of being free and being able to eat what we want and when we want. Perhaps this is why there is a separate mitzvah to eat the entire *korban*. Not only does it represent the freedom that we now have but it also helps us appreciate that which *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* has given us and hopefully will continue to give us in the future.

## What's in a Name?

Jonathan Kaplan

What's in a name? When it comes to the story of *Yetziyas Mitzrayim*, the Exodus from Egypt, the answer is - **everything**. The first *pasuk* of *Shemos* says "These are the names of Israel's sons who came to Egypt with Jacob, each with his family." The simple understanding is that Yaakov and his sons came down to Egypt. *Chazal*, in *Shemos Rabbah* 1: 5 also understand the *pasuk* in the literal sense. The "Names" of the sons of Israel came down to Egypt. In other words, not only did the people descend into the *Galus* of *Mitzrayim*, the Egyptian exile, but their names did as well.

Rav Moshe Shapiro explains that a name, in its most pure sense, only applies to something that has definition. When we went down to *Mitzrayim* we entered a place that in many ways was similar to the state of the world at the beginning of creation. At the time of creation the world is described as being in a state of *Tohu*- unformed matter. Genesis 1: 2 "The earth was without form and empty, with darkness on the face of the depths." It was a place that only existed in the potential but lacked definition. It was only in Genesis 1:3 when Hashem said, "There shall be light" that the world was transformed into a place of clarity. The same is true of people. When a person's entire being is only a vast array of possibilities without clear definition of purpose, then the individual is the personification of unformed matter. When there is a lack of definitive function, then the person might act on their desires but never get to a place of clarity of purpose.

*Chazal* explain that the Egyptians are compared to donkeys based on a *pasuk* in Yechezkel 23: 20 "Their flesh is the flesh of donkeys". The donkey is the animal most similar to unformed matter; It is open to anything. That is why the name in Hebrew for donkey is *chamor*, which is similar to the word, *chomer*, which is unformed matter. It was the Egyptians who epitomized unformed matter and forced the Jewish people to work with clay (*chomer*), forcing them to take on a similar approach to life. It is specifically to this place that we descended into exile and it becomes the place that we prepare for our birth as a nation and for our redemption. As it says in *Devarim* 4:34, "Has any god ever miraculously come to take for himself a nation from the midst of a nation... as all that Hashem your God did for you in Egypt in front of your eyes?" *Chazal* understand the term "from the midst" to be referring to a shepherd who reaches inside an animal to assist it in giving birth. If the redemption from Egypt is the birth of the Jewish people, then our exile to Egypt was the preparation and incubation for our eventual birth.

It is with this approach that we can understand the central role that names play in the Exodus story. At the beginning of Exodus, 2: 1-2, the *pasuk* describes the birth of Moshe *Rabbeinu*, the redeemer of *Klal Yisroel*: “A man of the house of Levi went and married Levi’s daughter. The woman became pregnant and had a son.” An obvious omission from this passage is the names. It is only later that the Torah identifies for us who the man and woman are - Exodus 6: 20 “Amram married his aunt Yocheved, and she bore him Aaron and Moses.” Perhaps the names are absent in chapter 2 to reflect the current state of the Jewish people. We had fallen into the abyss of Egypt and had lost our clarity of purpose. We lost our identity - our names. It is only later as the redemptive process begins to take shape that we see the names making their return. The same explanation can be applied to additional *pesukim*. Exodus 2: 11 “And he saw an Egyptian man striking a Hebrew man” and Exodus 2: 13 “He went out the next day and behold two Hebrew men were fighting.” In both cases the names of the people involved are absent. Perhaps this too is a reflection of the low and nameless state of the Jewish people at that time.

It is also for this reason that the revelation of Hashem’s name in the story takes on such a central role. In the exchange between Moshe and Hashem at the burning bush, Moshe asks Hashem, Exodus 3: 13-15 “So I will go to the Israelites and say, Your fathers’ God sent me to you. They will immediately ask me what His name is. What shall I say to them? I will be Who I will be, replied God to Moshe. God then explained that Moshe must say to the Israelites: “ ‘I will be’ sent me to you.” Rambam in *Moreh Nevuchim* 1: 63 explains that this name denotes that God has absolute existence. According to Kabbalah, as brought down by Aryeh Kaplan in *The Living Torah*, this name denotes the Crown (*Keter*) of creation, that is, the very first thought and impulse of Will that initiated the creative process. Hence it is “I will be”, since at the time of that impulse, everything was in the future. This first thought is identified with the idea of Israel. It is for this reason that this name is revealed now as Hashem is about to create the nation of Israel. In the next *Pasuk* Exodus 3:16 it says, “Go, gather the elders of Israel, and say to them, YHV-, The G-d of your fathers, appeared to me, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He said, ‘I have granted you special providence regarding what is happening to you in Egypt.’ ” The name in this *pasuk* denotes Hashem’s utter transcendence. It also denotes the creative power that constantly sustains the universe. Hashem was telling Moshe that not only is the initial purpose of creation now being fulfilled, but also the process that will insure its continual existence. With the revelation of *Shem* Hashem, Exodus 6:2-3, we are introduced to an additional aspect of G-d, another step closer to clarity of purpose.

The central role that names play in the story teaches us that from exile we experience a fundamental transformation. The world will never be the same. No longer is it a place of unformed matter but rather a place of clarity of purpose.

The children of Israel, *B'ni B'chori Yisroel*, the chosen people, become the medium, the carriers of the torch. It is with Hashem's Torah that we are given a clear direction- *Leman Daas Es Hashem* and *U'ledvaka Bo*, to know and understand Hashem and to cleave to Him.

## ***Korban Pesach and the Ghetto of Goshen***

Avi Strauss

The miraculous events of *yetzias Mitzrayim* mark the end of *Bnei Yisrael's* slavery in Egypt and the beginning of a new epoch in the history of the Jewish people as the chosen nation of Hashem. However, the nation's transition from a life of *avodah zarah* to a new life of *avodas Hashem* could not have been very easy. Before the *geulah* could be realized, *Bnei Yisrael* first had to escape the claws of a powerful Egyptian culture, and reject the *avodah zarah* that was so much a part of their lives.

Chazal famously teach us that *Bnei Yisrael* sunk to the lowest levels of *tumah* during their time in Egypt and only retained their Jewish identities by maintaining their traditional dress, speech, and names. In light of this, we need to ask ourselves: What happened to the Jewish people's enclave in Goshen? How could *Bnei Yisrael* have deteriorated so drastically if they had an established community, separate from the rest of *Mitzrayim* ?

In fact, Ibn Ezra and Ramban seem to indicate that the Egyptians and Jews maintained segregated communities, with *Bnei Yisrael* concentrated in Goshen (*Eretz Ra'amses*). It is precisely because these *meforshim* assume that *Bnei Yisrael* lived separately that they are hard-pressed to explain why, in 12:31, Moshe and Aharon were so close to the palace when Pharaoh sent his messengers scrambling to find them in the aftermath of *makkat bechorot*. Ibn Ezra explains that there was a distance of 6 *parsa'ot* between the *Mitzrayim* of old and the land of Ra'amses (an area which spanned 8 *parsa'ot* by itself), where the Jewish people lived.

The advantage of the Ibn Ezra and Ramban approach is that it certainly makes it easier to understand what precipitated Pharaoh's decision to enslave the Jewish people. Acutely aware of the nation of Israel and its growing numbers, Pharaoh feared that *Bnei Yisrael* might one day use its might to attack and conquer Egypt. Apparently, *Bnei Yisrael* were viewed as a nation with a clear identity, and its growing numbers posed a serious threat to Pharaoh. As a preemptive measure, therefore, Pharaoh chose to enslave the Jewish people.

In contrast with the view of Ibn Ezra and Ramban, we might argue that *Bnei Yisrael* assimilated into the general population of *Mitzrayim*.

In the beginning of *perek 12* of *Parshas Bo*, Hashem instructs *Bnei Yisrael* regarding the mitzvah of *korban pesach*. There, in passuk 4, Hashem orders, "*ve-lakach hu u-shecheino ha-karov el beito...*", so as to allow neighbors who

live close to one another to join forces to finish eating the *korban pesach* before daybreak.

Seforno points out that even though there were also *Mitzrim* who lived among the Jewish families, “*shecheino*” refers specifically to the *Ivri* who lived closest to the Jew’s house. In singling out the Jewish neighbor as the object of “*shecheino*”, Seforno implies that there was an integrated community of Egyptians and Jews. Consistent with this understanding, Seforno also believes that for every plague, with the exception of *makkat bechorot*, *Bnei Yisrael* suffered along with the other Egyptians. If they lived together in the same towns and communities, it’s very understandable why Seforno would be more inclined to say that *Bnei Yisrael* were affected, at least to a certain extent, by the plagues that afflicted the Egyptians.

Rashi (12:13) also adopts this general approach to explain what happened in *makkat bechorot*. If Hashem had to pass over the houses of the Jewish people to get to the Egyptian homes, and if the people needed to smear their doorposts with the blood of the *korban pesach* to distinguish their homes from those of the *Mitzrim*, it can only be said that “*ha-batim hayu sheruyim zeh be-toch zeh*” (the Jewish and Egyptian houses stood next to one other). Once we accept that Jews and Egyptians lived as neighbors to one another, we can better understand why Rashi interprets Hashem’s promise of protection on the night of *makkat bechorot* as extending only to a Yisrael in his own house and not to a Yisrael in the house of an Egyptian, or vice versa.

The approach of Rashi and Seforno can be explained in a number of possible ways. Perhaps, for example, *Bnei Yisrael* simply outgrew their homes in Goshen and slowly trickled into the general population out of necessity. Alternatively, we might wonder if the Egyptians started moving into Goshen. But ultimately, the most intriguing possibility may be to suggest that *Bnei Yisrael* willfully moved out of Goshen, joined the ranks of the *Mitzrim*, and assimilated into the general population. This paved the way for the Jews to adopt the Egyptian way of life as their own and worship the *avodah zarah* that their Egyptians neighbors so dutifully worshipped.

Whichever approach we adopt, but especially according to the second one advocated by Rashi and Seforno, it is clear that *Bnei Yisrael* needed to radically change their Egyptian mindset and reaffirm their relationship with Hashem before they could leave. In 12:21 of *parshas Bo*, Moshe instructs the people: “*mishchu u-kechu lachem tzon le-mishpichoteichem ve-shachatu ha-pesach*”. Quoting R. Matia ben Charash, Rashi explains that the *korban pesach* (and the mitzvah of *brit milah*) served a very practical function of providing *Bnei Yisrael* with the mitzvos that could justify Hashem’s decision to redeem them from slavery.

Similarly, a number of *meforshim* explain that smearing the blood on the doorposts served the practical purpose of protecting the Jewish people from the dangerous forces that accompanied the night of *makkat bechorot*. Ibn Ezra, for example, contends that the blood of the *korban pesach* served as a *kapara*, and was intended to resemble the sprinkling of the blood on the *mizbayach*. Others suggest that the blood on the doorposts and lintel created the shape of the letter *chet*, a symbol of “*chayim*” for those who dwelled in that house.

Rashi explains that, on a deeper level, Hashem was asking *Bnei Yisrael* to pull (*mishchu*) themselves away from the idolatry of *Mitzrayim* and take (*kechu*) the sheep for the mitzvah of *korban pesach*. Precisely because sheep were often the objects of *avodah zarah* worship in *Mitzrayim*, Hashem now told them to take the sheep in the service of Hashem. By doing so, *Bnei Yisrael* would not only accrue the mitzvot necessary for their own salvation, but also bring about a change in mentality necessary for a life of *avodas Hashem*.

The Chizkuni explains that Hashem wanted the *korban pesach* to demonstrate that *Bnei Yisrael* could take the Egyptians’ god and *shecht* it at the height of its “power” in the month of Nissan. At every stage in the *korban* process, *Mitzrayim* would see the way in which its god was denigrated and subjected to humiliation by *Bnei Yisrael*. Since *Bnei Yisrael* took the sheep and attached them to their houses a few days in advance of Pesach night, the Egyptians would have ample time to see what *Bnei Yisrael* planned to do. Any *Mitzri* who hadn’t seen the actual *shechitah* on the eve of the 14th would later see the blood of their gods smeared on the Israelites’ doorposts and detect the unmistakable smell of roasting meat being prepared for the Pesach meal. The desecration of the Egyptian gods would be complete as soon as *Bnei Yisrael* would eat the meat together with bitter herbs, rather than more palatable, *chashuv* food.

Similar to Rashi, the Ralbag explains that the purpose of the *korban pesach* and all of its particular laws was to send a message to the Jewish people. *Bnei Yisrael* had to reform their behavior and clearly reject the *avodah zarah* of *Mitzrayim* before they could leave and lead a life dedicated to Hashem. By subjecting the Egyptian gods to the humiliation of becoming the *korban pesach*, they began the process of internalizing the principle of *yichud Hashem* and changing their orientation to a life of serving Hashem.

As we celebrate Pesach, let us use the *korban pesach* as a *zikaron* for ourselves—as a tool to reject any values of the secular world that may be antithetical to our own faith, and as a tool to re-orient ourselves and re-establish our commitment to Hashem.

## The Meaning of Leaning

Rabbi Tanchum Cohen

*Oftentimes in the majestic exercise of talmud torah, one detail can serve as a window into global understanding of an entire topic. Such a vista is particularly exciting when we thereby gain fresh insight into an otherwise familiar topic, such as the Seder, which we naturally associate with a richness of colorful detail.*

### I. A Question of Scope

The Gemara's discussion of *haseiba* focuses primarily on the halachic menu of the Seder night, for while the Mishna<sup>1</sup> opens the *halachos* of the *seuder* with the obligation to perform *haseiba*, or reclining, in the context of eating (אפילו עני שבישראל לא יאכל עד שיסב), the Mishna does not clarify which foods require *haseiba*. The Gemara's discussion<sup>2</sup> opens with a simple two-part statement: . איתמר, מצה צריך הסיבה, מרור אין צריך הסיבה . Eating *matza* requires *haseiba*; *maror* does not. (The Gemara proceeds to consider the various *kosos* throughout the evening, concluding that they, too, must all be drunk in a position of *haseiba*.)

Tosfos<sup>3</sup> points to a lingering ambiguity – does *haseiba* apply only to the *matza* eaten at the inception of the *seuda*, or would the *afikoman* require *haseiba* as well? Beis Yosef<sup>4</sup> records that many *rishonim* explicitly debate this issue. Rambam<sup>5</sup> writes that *haseiba* is necessary only while eating the *ke-zayis* of *matza*; Rosh<sup>6</sup> and other *talmidim* of Maharam of Rothenburg, however, adopt Tosfos' position that *afikoman* calls for *haseiba* as well.

### II. Take One

Analyzing this *machlokes ha-rishonim* seems a simple exercise at first blush. Tosfos and Rosh must hold that eating *afikoman* is part and parcel of *mitzvas matza* and thus the Gemara's statement requiring *haseiba* for "matza" includes *afikoman*, while Rambam must hold that *mitzvas*

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1. משנה פסחים (צט:).

2. גמ' שם (קת).

3. תוס' (סוף ד"ה מאי).

4. בית יוסף או"ח (ס"י תע"ב סעי' ח').

5. רמב"ם הל' חמץ ומצה (פ"ז הל' ח').

6. רא"ש פסחים (פרק י' ריש סי' כ').

*afikoman* is independent of *mitzvas matza* and thus *afikoman* is excluded from the Gemara's comment.

Despite the simple elegance of this explanation, it actually is demonstrably false on two counts. Near the close of *hilchos Chametz u-Matza*<sup>7</sup>, Rambam cites Rif's *pesak* that one who has only one *ke-zayis* of *matza shemura* fit for the *mitzva* ought to save it for *afikoman* and not squander it at the beginning of the *seuda*. This clearly indicates that Rambam understood *afikoman* as an integral part of *mitzvas matza*, and perhaps even its primary component. Moreover, Rosh in fact is the one who interprets *afikoman* as something other than an element of *mitzvas matza*. According to him<sup>8</sup>, *afikoman* is rather *zecher le-korban pesach*.

All this indicates that we must look elsewhere to make sense of the *haseibas afikoman* controversy – we can neither interpret Rosh as requiring *haseiba* because *afikoman* is a component of *mitzvas matza*, nor can we maintain that Rambam does not require *haseiba* because *afikoman* is a separate *zecher* unrelated to *mitzvas matza*. A broader, “wide-angle” perspective on *haseiba* might prove helpful in constructing a new approach.

### III. The Big Picture

Rambam chose to nestle the *halachos* of *haseiba* within the seventh *perek* of his *hilchos Chametz u-Matza*. This *perek* opens with the *mitzvah de-oraisa* of *sippur yetzias Mitzrayim*, retelling and relating the narrative of *yetzias Mitzrayim* on the first night of Pesach. In *halacha* 6 of that *perek*, he maintains that the rubric of *sippur yetzi'as Mitzrayim* includes an obligation to visibly portray this story: בכל דור ודור חייב אדם להראות את עצמו כאילו הוא בעצמו יצא ממצרים. Rambam then presents eating and drinking *be-haseiba* (and drinking *arba kosos*) as rabbinically mandated methods of fulfilling this *mitzva de-oraisa*: לפיכך כשסועד אדם לבליה הזה צריך לאכול ולשתות והוא מיסב דרך חירות. After offering this abstract of *haseiba*, Rambam proceeds to various details of *haseiba* (who must perform *haseiba*; *haseiba* on one's left side or right side; etc.), concluding with the note that it is required only when consuming the initial *ke-zayis matza* and the four *kosos*, but is meaningful and encouraged throughout the *seuda*.; ואימתי צריכין הסיבה בשעת אכילת כזית, מצה ובשתיית ארבעה כוסות האלו, ושאר אכילתו ושתיתו אם היסב הרי זה משובח ואם לאו אינו צריך.

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7. עפ"י הר"ף בסוף פירקין (כו. בדפיו, "והיכא דלית ליה, וכו'"); ומאידך יעויין ברא"ש (פרק י' ס"ו ל"ה) ובהגהות אשר"י שם; רמב"ם סוף הל' חמץ ומצה (פ"ח הל' י"ג) רא"ש (פרק י' ס"ו ל"ד) בדעת עצמו ודלא כרשב"ם שהביא שם.

Clearly, notes the Brisker Rav<sup>9</sup>, Rambam understood that *haseiba* constitutes a *mitzvah de-rabbanan* in its own right – a branch of *sippur yetzias Mitzrayim*. After all, were it to be merely an (*de-rabbanan*) aspect of *mitzvos matza ve-arba kosos*, it would belong in the previous *perek* together with the rest of *hilchos matza*. Moreover, the same point is manifest as well both in the sequence of Rambam's presentation – his initial definition of *haseiba* as an example of *yetzias Mitzrayim* portrayal, with no mention of *matza* and *kosos* until the very end – and in his position that *haseiba* is meaningful with all *seder* food.

The Brisker Rav then constructs an elegant proof that Rosh, on the other hand, did conceive of *haseiba* as merely an element of *matza* and *arba kosos* and not as an independent *mitzva*, fundamentally disagreeing with Rambam. (Regrettably, the proof lies beyond the scope of this brief article.)

#### IV. Take Two

With this principle in mind, we can now offer a fresh solution to the *afikoman* conundrum. According to Rosh, *haseiba* is not an independent *mitzva*; instead, it is the prescribed way to fulfill other *mitzvos* – the *mitzvos achila* of the evening. It naturally applies to *afikoman* as to *matzas mitzva*, and indeed would presumably apply to *korban pesach* as well.

Rambam, on the other hand, holds that *haseiba* is a *mitzva* unto itself and need not be in the context of other *mitzvos*. It does need to be performed in conjunction with eating and drinking – after all, *haseiba* was an upscale way of dining, not a method of conversing or of resting, etc. – and so both the Mishna and Rambam's abstract present *haseiba* as a *mitzva* fulfilled during eating and drinking in general – כשסועד אדם בלילה – הזה צריך לאכול ולשתות והוא מיסב דרך חירות *haseiba* during any and all consumption is a meaningful display of *cheirus*, as Rambam indeed holds. It also follows that Rambam's question *ואימתי צריכין הסיבה* is not to be interpreted as “Which *mitzvos* require *haseiba*?”, but rather “What or which dining constitutes the *shiur* to minimally fulfill the *mitzvas haseiba*?” Similarly, the answer he offers is that the *chachamim* chose to mandate *haseiba* only in the context of the initial *matza* consumption of the evening, and this poses no contradiction to his support of Rif's opinion that *afikoman* is the highlight of *mitzvas matza*.

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9. חיל' מרן רי"ז הלוי הכא (פ"ז הל' ז).

May we be inspired to vividly relate and portray the *yetzias Mitzrayim* narrative and thus meaningfully relay its messages and lessons of *emuna* and of hope, and may we soon grapple with the question of *haseiba be-korban pesach* as a *she'eila le-ma'ase*.

כן ה' אלקינו ואלקי אבותינו יגיענו למועדים ולרגלים אחרים הבאים לקראתנו לשלום  
שמחים בבנין עירך וששים בעבודתך  
ונאכל שם מן הזבחים ומן הפסחים שיגיע דמם על קיר מזבחך לרצון  
ונודה לך שיר חדש על גאולתנו ועל פדות נפשנו

## Wait Until Dark

Seth Lebowitz

On any given erev Shabbat or erev yom tov, one has the option of saying kiddush (and eating the ensuing meal) early, before nightfall.<sup>1</sup> One may even do so when it is still broad daylight outside, well before the normal definition of when Shabbat and yom tov begin. Whether one in fact says kiddush earlier or later is largely a matter of personal preference at these times.

On pesach, one might imagine that “starting early” and reciting kiddush when it is still broad daylight would be required, or at least recommended, given that the *Shulchan Aruch* states מצוה למהר לאכול בשביל התינוקות שלא יישנו.<sup>2</sup> But despite both the general principle and the special time pressure on the first night of pesach, we find that the מחבר continues אבל לא יאמר קדיש עד שתחשך, which the *Mishna Brura* explains means לאחר צאת הכוכבים.<sup>3</sup> Such a counterintuitive result merits further investigation and clarification.

One explanation for the requirement to say kiddush only after *tzeit hokochavim*, given by the מגן אברהם, is that kiddush on the first night of Pesach is the first of the *arba kosot*, all of which are required to be at night.<sup>4</sup> While it is intuitively appealing that the mitzvot associated with the *arba kosot* need to be at night, the reasoning behind this explanation is not self-evident. How does the מ"א know that each of the *arba kosot* has to be at night? Kiddush is normally recited at night, and the eating of a *seu'dat Shabbat* or *seudat yom tov* normally takes place at night, but nonetheless the option exists to perform these actions early, before nightfall. Perhaps the *takana* of *arba kosot* is similar to other *mitzvot halaila* of Shabbat or yom tov and therefore can take place early as well? One possible explanation of the מ"א is an idea developed by R. Yaakov Betzalel Zolty, former chief rabbi of Yerushalayim. Rav Zolty suggests that many of the mitzvot performed during the seder are not merely independent mitzvot, but are also *kiyumim* of the מצוה מן התורה of ספור יציאת מצרים. For example, Rav Zolty says, consumption of *maror*, which expresses the idea of וימררו את חייהם<sup>5</sup>, and drinking *arba kosot*, which expresses the four expressions of geula from the beginning of *parshat va'era*,<sup>6</sup> each accomplishes a *kiyum* of the mitzvah of ספור

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1. See סימן רע"ב; שולחן ערוך סימן רס"ג; regarding yom tov see משנה ברורה ב. All citations to the שולחן ערוך and its commentaries are to אורח חיים.

2. שולחן ערוך תע"ב: א.

3. סימן תע"ב, משנה ברורה ה.

4. מ"א תע"ב: א.

5. שמות א: יד.

6. שמות ו: ו-ז; ירושלמי פסחים י"א.

יצאת מצרים.<sup>7</sup> It is clear that ספור יציאת מצרים needs to take place after nightfall on the fifteenth of Nisan.<sup>8</sup> Apparently it would be meaningless to try to fulfill the mitzvah of ספור יציאת מצרים at any time other than the night of the fifteenth of Nisan, just as it would be meaningless to, say, blow a shofar *l'shem mitzvah* on a day other than Rosh Hashana. In order to have any possible impact as a *kiyum* of the mitzvah of ספור יציאת מצרים, all of the *arba kosot* need to be after *tzeit hakochavim*, which is the time the Torah defined for ספור יציאת מצרים, and it becomes clear why one must wait for nightfall to say kiddush.

The ר"ט, on the other hand, states that one may not say kiddush on the first night of pesach until after *tzeit hakochavim* for an entirely different reason --because the mitzvah of *achilat matza* is compared to the mitzvah of *achilat korban pesach*, and the *korban pesach* clearly may only be eaten at night.<sup>9</sup> Kiddush, according to the ר"ט, needs to be “בשעה ראיה למצה.” This appears to be an application of the principle of “אין קדוש אלא במקום סעודה,”<sup>10</sup> though applied to time rather than space. Although one normally conceives of “אין קדוש אלא במקום” as relating to physical location, the רמ"א states in this context<sup>11</sup> that the meal should come “*l'alter*”, i.e. immediately, following kiddush. Perhaps, according to the ר"ט, the מחבר's rule regarding the timing of kiddush on the first night of pesach is just an application of this general principle to a situation in which the meal (i.e. the matza) cannot, for a special reason, be eaten until nightfall. If the meal cannot be eaten until nightfall, and the meal needs to follow kiddush immediately, it would be reasonable to wait until nightfall to say kiddush as well. However, one could still fulfill the רמ"א's rule by saying kiddush immediately before *tzeit hakochavim* and eating matza immediately afterward, or as a practical matter, even saying kiddush considerably beforehand, since there is a long natural gap for all the parts of the seder between “*kadesh*” and “*motzi matza*.”

One could suggest that ר"ט's explanation of the rule that one may not say kiddush on the first night of pesach until after *tzeit hakochavim* illuminates an aspect of the halacha of “אין קדוש אלא במקום סעודה”. It may be that this rule does not mean merely that one has to say kiddush in the same place as his meal and immediately before that meal, but rather that kiddush actually becomes part of the ensuing meal. The מחבר writes that a person who says kiddush and has no

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7. משנת יעב"ץ, הלכות מועדים, סימן י"ח.

8. “יכול מבעוד יום תלמוד לומר בעבור זה, בעבור זה לא אמרתי אלא בשעה שיש מצה ומרור מונחים לפניך”

הגדה של פסח על פי מכילתא בא, פרשה יז

9. ראה שמות יב:ח; רמב"ם קרבן פסח ח"א.

10. שולחן ערוך רעג:א.

11. רמ"א רעג:ג.

meal in the same place has not fulfilled his obligation of kiddush and is required to say kiddush again and eat a meal.<sup>12</sup> One might have assumed that in this case although the principle of *קדוש במקום סעודה* was not fulfilled, one nevertheless would fulfill his obligation of kiddush, especially in a case, for example, of a person who has wine but no food.<sup>13</sup> Since this is not the case, it appears that kiddush is inseparable halachically from the meal, and one way to explain this is that kiddush is in fact a part of the meal. It is not an independent mitzvah that requires a meal to follow. Rather, kiddush is the first step in a proper *seudat Shabbat* or *yom tov*. If so, it follows logically not only that kiddush needs to be in the same location and immediately followed by the meal, but also that on a night when, for a special reason, the meal cannot be eaten until after nightfall, kiddush may also not be recited until nightfall, since the kiddush serves as the start of the meal itself. Although further *iyun* would be required to determine whether this concept is valid, let us accept it here as at least a speculative possibility for understanding the *ט"ו*.

One might ask what, if anything, is at stake practically in this *מחלוקת* between the *ט"ו* and the *מ"מ*. The *Pri Megadim* offers a surprising *nafka mina* relating not to pesach but to sukkot. In general, we see a halachic comparison between certain aspects of the first nights of pesach and sukkot. For example, the *מ"מ* states that one must not eat on the first night of sukkot until nightfall, and that one must have eaten on the first night of sukkot by *chatzot halaila*, and these rules regarding *achila b'sukka* are both learned from the rules regarding *achilat matza* on the first night of pesach.<sup>14</sup> If one holds, like the *ט"ו*, that one may not say kiddush on the first night of pesach until nightfall because of the linkage between kiddush and *achilat matza*, then one would presumably say that a similar linkage between kiddush and *achila b'sukka* exists, and that this linkage would preclude one from saying kiddush before nightfall on the first night of sukkot.

On the other hand, if one believes, like the *מ"מ*, that the rationale for not saying kiddush on the first night of pesach until nightfall is that kiddush is the first of the *arba kosot*, then one would assume that kiddush before nightfall on the first night of sukkot should be perfectly permissible, since *arba kosot* is a mitzvah unique to pesach with no application to sukkot.<sup>15</sup>

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12. שולחן ערוך רע"ג.

13. Although a person with wine but no food still makes kiddush, he still requires *קדוש במקום סעודה*, and he is required to have a minimal amount of wine. משנה ברורה כב. שולחן ערוך רע"ג.

14. *מ"מ* א"ת"ל"ט:ג.

15. ראה פרי מגדים אשל אברהם סימן תעב.

Another possible *nafka mina* would be the case of a person who has made a *shavua* not to eat matza. Such a person is forbidden to eat matza at the seder, despite the fact that it is a mitzvah.<sup>16</sup> If a person is conducting his seder but not eating any matza, the ר"ט might permit him to say kiddush before nightfall, since the reason for waiting until nightfall for kiddush is the link between kiddush and matza, and in this particular circumstance there is no matza and therefore no such link can exist. On the other hand, if one holds like the א"מ, then one might say that kiddush would still be required to come only after *tzeit hakochavim*, since the fact that one is precluded from eating matza would apparently not have any effect on the *chiyuv* of *arba kosot*.

חג כשר ושמח:

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שולחן ערוך תפח: א. 16.

## **A Haggadah Within A Haggadah**

Rabbi Dr. Aaron Ross

### **I. TELL ME A STORY**

Of the commandments that are particular to the Seder night, the broadest, and perhaps most perplexing, is that of *Sippur Yetziat Mitzrayim*, the injunction to tell over the story of the Exodus from Egypt. Our fulfillment of this commandment is most manifest in our recitation of the Magid section of the Haggadah, but clearly it does not stop there. Even within that section we are told the story of the five Rabbis who stayed up all night in Bnei-Brak recounting the wonders of the Exodus, until their students came to call them for the morning prayers.

Our goal herein will be twofold. First, we must answer a major question concerning the mere existence of the mitzva of *Sippur Yetziat Mitzrayim*: We know that there is a commandment to remember the Exodus every day, a commandment that we generally fulfill by reciting the third paragraph of the Shema. If this is so, then what is added by this special commandment on Pesach? Is one merely an expansion of the other? Are they separate commandments? If they are distinct, what distinguishes them and are they perhaps still connected in any way?

Our second issue will be to use our understanding of this commandment to try to make some sense of the structure of Magid. While we are all very familiar with all of the various paragraphs that we recite, we must consider the fact that Magid is essentially a hodgepodge of unrelated selections from Rabbinic literature. For now, we will offer just two examples. First, Rabbi Elazar ben Azaria's statement about trying to institute the mentioning of the Exodus at night is not a statement that is in any way related to Pesach. Rather, it is a mishna in Berachot that speaks about the recitation of the Shema. Second, one of the central elements of Magid is the recounting of Jewish history beginning with Lavan's deceit of Yaakov (or possibly with Avraham - there is a big debate who "*Arami Oveid Avi*" refers to). Again, we must ask why that is directly relevant to the story of the Jews in Egypt and their eventual salvation. While we may be able to connect it, that does not explain its prominence in the Seder. We will return to these issues, along with several others, in the latter portions of this article.

### **II. DO YOU REMEMBER...?**

Let us begin now with our analysis of the first question posed. Rambam (Sefer HaMitzvot Aseh #157, Hil. Chametz U'Matzah 7) lists *Sippur Yetziat Mitzrayim* as its own commandment, although his sources are not so clear. In the Sefer HaMitzvot, he claims that this mitzva is based on the verse of "And you shall tell it to your sons (*V'Higadeta L'vincha*) on that day..." (Shemot 13:8), while in the

Yad HaChazakah itself he lists both that verse and the verse of "Remember (*Zachor*) the day that you left Egypt..." (Shemot 13:3). In the latter locale, he uses *Zachor* to inform us of the existence of such a commandment, and *V'Higadeta L'vincha* to tell us that it must be fulfilled on the night of the fifteenth of Nissan. The Minchat Chinuch (#21) notes that Rambam uses both verses as complementary to each other, and thus both are needed.

We must now revisit our question. If we already have a commandment to mention the Exodus every day (and every night), what is added to this commandment on the night of the fifteenth? Is it merely a numbers game, i.e. by saying the Shema on that night we will fulfill two commandments instead of one, or is there something more substantial going on?

Rav Chaim Soloveitchik ("Grach") offers three distinctions between the two mitzvot. First he notes that the daily commandment to remember the Exodus can be done alone, while the specific commandment of *Sippur* must ideally be done with others (Rabbeinu Manoach encourages a person who would otherwise be alone to try to find other people to have Seder with so that he may fulfill this aspect). This element is accented by the fact that a person who is alone cannot simply read the story to himself, but must use the same question-and-answer format that would be used if others would be present (Ritva even says that a person who is alone must say the *Ma Nishtana* to himself). Second, Rav Chaim notes that, as per the mishna in Pesachim 116a, when telling the story on the night of Pesach we must begin with the shameful portions and conclude with praise. While the precise referents of this phrase will be dealt with as we proceed, it is certainly an element that is not necessary on any other day. Finally, Rav Chaim claims that the commandment on the first night of Pesach includes a requirement to discuss the reasons behind the various laws of Pesach, such as matza and maror. While our execution of this is clearest by our recitation of the mishna of Rabban Gamliel, we will see that this aspect plays a very large role in the scope of this mitzva.

There are a few other distinctions between *Zeicher* and *Sippur* that are offered. Rav Chaim's son, Rav Yitzchak Zev Soloveitchik ("Griz") notes that not only does one have to discuss the reasons for the mitzvot while recounting the Exodus during the Seder, but he also must actually be involved in the performance of those mitzvot. This becomes an issue with regard to the latest time for fulfilling the mitzva of *Sippur*. If it is completely tied up in the performance of the mitzvot, then perhaps it is bound by midnight, as one may not eat matza after midnight. If, however, its connection to the actual performance of the mitzvot is loosened, then perhaps it can still be fulfilled throughout the entire night and into the morning (Shibbolei HaLeket notes that the five Rabbis could have continued discussing the Exodus all day if not for the fact that Shema is time bound and its time would have passed had they continued their discussions).

Finally, there is a further distinction brought by Rav Chaim's grandson, Rav Yoseif Dov Soloveitchik. In addition to those ideas already cited, he notes the fact that the daily commandment to remember the Exodus has no connection to saying Hallel in praise of God for redeeming us. On the other hand, the mitzva of *Sippur* on the first night of Pesach entails a requirement to say Hallel. Thus, the mishna in Pesachim 116b discusses how much of Hallel must be appended to the end of Magid (we include the last two paragraphs at that point).

This view may provide us with another reason why no blessing is said on Hallel at the Seder. While many Rishonim (Ritzba, Maharam MiRutenberg, Rav Hai Gaon, Rav Tzemach Gaon, Rav Amram Gaon) actually advocated saying two blessings on Hallel at the Seder - one by Magid and one when we recite it after the meal, our custom is to follow Ra'avayah, Ritz Giat, Rosh, and the Tur, who follow Tosafot Rid and do not say a blessing on it at all, as it is all one unit and there is a huge time lapse between the beginning and the end of its recitation. However, this idea of The Rov may offer a further explanation, one highlighted by the Derisha. He explains that saying Hallel at the Seder is a fulfillment of the need to see oneself as if he just came out of Egypt (as per Rambam's formulation that one has to actually imagine that it is happening to him right now). Just as the Jews said Hallel when they were redeemed, so too do we have to say it in our moment of (virtual ) redemption. Taking these two views together, it seems to me that there is no reason to make a blessing on Hallel, as it is not its own mitzva - it is merely a segment of the commandment to tell over the story of the Exodus.

This is all good and well, but there is at least one Rishon who maintains a connection between the daily mitzva of remembering the Exodus and the special mitzva on the first night of Pesach of recounting the entire story in full detail. In answer to the question of why there is no blessing made on the reading of the Haggadah (as there seemingly should be), Rif answers that we do, in a way, fulfill the need to make such a blessing. How so? Since the text of kiddush includes the phrase "*Zeicher l'yetziat Mitzrayim*" (a remembrance of the Exodus from Egypt), that counts as enough of a connection between the commandment to tell the story and some form of a blessing (which kiddush is) to fulfill this need (Rashba says that there is no blessing because the mitzva of *Sippur* has no fixed time limit). What is notable about the view of Rif is that this line in kiddush occurs in every kiddush during the year and addresses the daily commandment, and not the one for the first night of Pesach. Nevertheless, he maintains that while they may be very distinct in many aspects, there is still enough of a connection to allow for kiddush to cover the commandment of *Sippur Yetziat Mitzrayim*.

### III. SAY WHAT?

We now begin the real challenge - understanding how the Magid section of the Haggadah is structured. Two main questions will guide this inquiry. First, based on our conception of the commandment of *Sippur Yetziat Mitzrayim*, what parts of Magid actually fulfill that mitzva? Is saying "*Avadim Hayinu*" enough? Is saying everything in our current text enough? (content question)

The second big question is what does the gemara mean when it says that we must "begin with the shame and end with the praise"? What is the shame? What is the praise? How do the varying opinions on each not only find their way into our Haggadah but also how are they placed in relation to each other and to other elements of the Magid section? (structure question)

Let us begin with figuring out what should be included in our fulfillment of *Sippur Yetziat Mitzrayim*. The simplest approach would seem to be that we are enjoined to tell over the actual story of our enslavement in Egypt and the redemption that ensued. This idea is bolstered by the story of the five Rabbis in Bnei Brak, and perhaps also by the inclusion of the mishna of Rabi Elazar ben Azariah. As we noted above, he is speaking not about *Sippur Yetziat Mitzrayim*, but rather about the "other" mitzva, namely the daily commandment to remember the Exodus. Nevertheless, the presence of that mishna in our Haggadah may point to the fact that the special commandment of *Sippur* is, in a sense, merely an expansion of the daily commandment, and thus the real focus on this night is to relate the Exodus story.

However, we must also consider the other option for what our focus should be. Near the end of Magid, we read the mishna of Rabban Gamliel (Pesachim 116b), who states that one must mention the three main commandments of this night - the Pesach-sacrifice, the matza, and the maror. Here the focus seems to be not as much on the story as it is on the mitzvot themselves. This may be highlighted by a line in Pesachim 116a. In discussing the need to ask the four question, the gemara says that if one has no son or wife, he asks the questions to himself. The gemara then states that "even two wise men who are well-versed in the **LAWS** of Pesach must ask the questions." While the Haggadah (in "*Avadim Hayinu*") says "even if we know the entire Torah, we are still commanded to talk about the Exodus," the fact that the gemara focuses on these laws may imply that they are a focus.

This focus on the laws has various other advocates. The *Shibbolei HaLeket* links the entire mitzva of *Sippur* to the other mitzvot of the night, and claims that for this reason we raise up the matza and maror when we speak about them. Rambam has perhaps the clearest formulation of this idea when he states "One must say Pesach, matza, and maror, and that is what is called Haggadah," seemingly hanging the entire mitzva of *Sippur* on its connection to the other

mitzvot (this may be consistent with his use of "*V'Higadeta L'vincha*" as a source for this commandment - that verse appears in the context of the commandment for us to eat matza and not to eat chametz during Pesach - see Shemot 13:6-8). Bach claims that ideally the Haggadah should be said in the presence of the matza that will be used for the mitzva, and thus we begin with "*Ha Lachma Anya*" - a reference to the matza. We should also note again the view that *Sippur* is so connected to the other mitzvot of the night that it only applies as long as the mitzva of matza applies, and thus there is only a commandment to tell over the story of Pesach until midnight.

(As a postscript to this idea, we should note that Rav Yoseif Dov Soloveitchik claims that the five Rabbis in Bnei Brak were discussing the mitzvot of Pesach, and were not just telling stories).

As it turns out, we satisfy both views in our Haggadah - we say "*Avadim Hayinu*" as well as "*Arami Oveid Avi*," both of which recount the story of the slavery and redemption, and we also recite the mishna of Rabban Gamliel, thus focusing somewhat on the mitzvot themselves. However, we should also note that these two views are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Meiri notes that the three things in Rabban Gamliel's mishna are a part of telling the story. How is this so? One possible viewpoint requires us to pause and remind ourselves of what Rabban Gamliel really demands of us. He does not insist that we merely mention these three commandments, but that we explain them and give full detailed accounts of why we are performing them. If one takes this seriously, he will inevitably wind up telling the story with all of its minutiae and nuances. Following Rabban Gamliel thus achieves the beautiful result that we "jump off" from his mishna, satisfy both views of what *Sippur Yetziat Mitzrayim* is, and manage to make the mitzvot of eating matza and maror, which could very easily be done by rote, into meaningful and living aspects of our celebration of Pesach.

#### **IV. A METHOD TO THE MADNESS**

Now that we understand a small part of why we have so many varied elements in Magid, we will now try to offer an insight into the composition of the Haggadah. As mentioned above, we have to first understand what is meant by "shame" and "praise."

Rambam has a most interesting, and somewhat confusing, approach to this issue. He states "We begin with shame, which is 'Terach the father of Avraham' and end with praise, which is the true faith. We also begin with '*Avadim Hayinu*' and end with the miracles that Hashem did for us, which means learning the exegesis on the verses of '*Arami Oveid Avi*.'" What is Rambam talking about? What does the "true faith" refer to in the context of our Haggadah? What does he believe is the shame? What is the praise? Does his second statement offer an alternative to his first, or is he being sensitive to the fact that the mishna tells us both to "begin

with the shame and end with the praise" as well as to "learn the verses of '*Arami Oveid Avi*'"?

However we explain Rambam, the current arrangement of the Haggadah is somewhat difficult to fit into his view. He sees our reference to Avraham as being a beginning point and *Arami Oveid Avi* as being an ending point. However, they come next to each other in our text. If we were really following Rambam, it would seem to make sense to fulfill each of his statements separately, as opposed to overlapping them!

I would like to suggest that what we really have is a "Haggadah within a Haggadah". There are two keys to this point. The first is the double Hallel that occurs within Magid. One is the two chapters of Tehillim (113 and 114) that we conclude this section of the Seder with, which we generally refer to as Hallel. The second one is Dayeinu, which is also a form of Hallel - it is sung "*l'hallel u'l'hodot*" - to praise and to thank Hashem for all that he did for us when he took us out of Egypt. Why do we need two different Hallel's? If we look at the view of Tosafot Rid, we find that he says that saying Hallel is the fulfillment of the gemara's demand that we "end with praise." If this is true, then by saying Hallel twice, that would seem to imply that we discharge our duty to "begin with shame and conclude with praise" not one, but two times during the course of Magid.

The Shibbolei HaLeket makes an interesting comment which may help us to further understand this issue. He claims that "*Avadim Hayinu*" comes as a direct answer for the question about why we lean, and the answers to the other questions are deferred until the very end, when we recite the mishna of Rabban Gamliel. If this is true, then the beginning and end of Magid may be able to be viewed as forming bookends to what comes in between. We begin with the four questions, we give the initial answer of "*Avadim Hayinu*," we answer the other questions with Rabban Gamliel, and then we say Hallel. This mini-structure alone fulfills just about every requirement that we have for the Seder - it is done in question-and-answer form, it both tells the story and discusses the mitzvot, it goes from shame to praise, and it includes Hallel.

Within that structure, we have the meat of Magid. The "internal Magid" begins with two introductory paragraphs about the mitzva of *Sippur Yetziat Mitzrayim* (the five Rabbis and Rabi Elazar ben Azariah). We then say "*Baruch HaMakom*," which some view as being the blessing on the commandment of *Sippur Yetziat Mitzrayim*. Having made the blessing, we begin fulfilling the commandment. Instead of simply asking four questions, we discuss four types of sons and their questions. We then begin our answer by mentioning "*V'Higadeta L'vincha*" - stating our obligation to tell over the story on this night (and mentioning the need to relate the story to the other mitzvot). From there we recount Jewish History, beginning with our idolatrous ancestors, proceeding to

Avraham's discovery of Hashem and Hashem's promise to him that his descendants would be enslaved but would ultimately be freed, and finally learning the Midrash on "*Arami Oveid Avi*" as a way of telling over many of the details of our enslavement in Egypt and Hashem's salvation of us. We end all of this with Dayeinu.

What should be clear is that the "internal Magid" is a near-copy of the "external Magid," albeit more detailed. Why do we do this? It would be much simpler to have one, continuous progressive text! I would like to suggest that in arranging itself in this manner, the Haggadah stresses the entire point of this mitzva. The "external Magid" is an extremely basic fulfillment of *Sippur Yetziat Mitzrayim*. It fulfills all of our requirements, but does so in the most general way possible. The "internal Magid" plays off of the general structure of the external one, but gets even more detailed. As such, the internal Hallel, Dayeinu, is very specific in what it praises Hashem for, while the external Hallel is more general in its praise. Perhaps the editor of the Haggadah is reminding us that even the text that we have is not enough. True, we can fulfill our obligation by reciting only what is contained in the "external Magid," but we must strive to step it up a level and recount the story of the Exodus in the manner of the "internal Magid." Beyond that, even the internal section is not sufficient - just as the Haggadah surpasses itself in its execution of this commandment, so too are we encouraged to surpass the text of the Haggadah in our telling of the story. The Haggadah should serve not as the central point of our Seder, but as the basic point of departure for much greater discussion.

## Structure of the Haggadah

Rabbi Yaakov Blau

There are two major components of the הגדה, each of which is well known on its own, but which also work together in a less obvious way. Let us examine each component by itself.

Many things are done at the סדר in order to motivate the children present to ask questions. An often quoted phrase is כדי שיכירו תינוקות וישאלו (פסחים דף קטו עמוד ב). The gemara there discusses acting in an unusual fashion in order to pique the children's interest. Similarly, רשי and רשב"ם explain the purpose of כרפס as being a means to get the children to question (קיד עמוד א). Finally, there is the מה נשתנה, which the father is instructed to teach his children to ask, even if they don't yet have the level of understanding to do so independently. (קטו עמוד א). The gemara (ibid.) says even if there is no one else to ask, a person must ask himself. Clearly, the הגדה is meant to be an interactive process of questions and answers.

The second component is that the manner in which one is supposed to tell the story is to be מתחיל בגנות ומסיים בשבח (start with the bad and end with the good, קטו עמוד א). The gemara (ibid.) has two ways of understanding this, either as physically - that we were slaves and then freed or spiritually - that we were idolators and became monotheists. We do both (רמב"ם הלכות חמץ ומצה ז:ד) by saying מתחלה עובדי ע"ז היו אבותינו and עבדים היינו.

Now it is interesting that there are two sets of questions in the הגדה, the מה נשתנה and the ארבעה בנים. Each one of these sets immediately precedes one of the ways that we fulfill being בשבח בגנות ומסיים בשבח. The מה נשתנה is immediately before עבדים היינו and the four sons before היו אבותינו. It would seem that since the structure of the הגדה is supposed to be one of question and answer, it was necessary to follow this format for each method of telling the story (i.e. being בשבח בגנות ומסיים בשבח). Thus, the structure of the הגדה is such that it has both components always working together.

## Imagination and Redemption - Past and Future

Rabbi Avie Schreiber

Redemption, the dominant theme of ליל הסדר, is articulated throughout the evening in many ways. By delving into one of the primary *Mitzvot* of the night - ספוד יציאת מצרים - we can identify the key to our redemption in the past. In turn, we can learn to unlock the potential to our present and future redemption as well.

### I. The Ironic twist of ליל הסדר

I would like to begin by asking two questions regarding the Seder evening :

**Question #1** - ל"ח teach us אדם לראות את עצמו כאילו הוא יצא ממצרים. Why does the *Mitzvah* of ספוד יציאת מצרים include this detail? No other *Mitzvah* that involves memory of a past event requires us actually to visualize ourselves reliving the event!

Before asking the second question we need to clarify two issues.

1) At what time of day did בני ישראל gain their freedom from מצרים? Based on the פסוקים and many החומש, *Am Yisrael* as a whole physically left מצרים during the daytime on the 15th of ניסן, as it says in the *Pasuk*: וַיְהִי בַּעֲצָם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה הוֹצִיא ה' אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם עַל־צְבָאוֹתָם:<sup>1</sup> However, the status of the Jews changed beforehand. It seems that at חצות - when מכת בכורות occurred, the Jews gained the status of free people<sup>2</sup>. This is based on the *Pasuk*: וַיִּקָּם פְּרַעֲהַ לַיְלָה הוּא וְכָל־עַבְדָּיו.... וַיִּקְרָא לְמוֹשֶׁה וּלְאַהֲרֹן לַיְלָה וַיֹּאמְרוּ קוּמוּ צְאוּ מִתּוֹךְ עַמִּי בַּיּוֹם הַזֶּה הוֹצִיא ה' אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם:<sup>3</sup> Based on this *Pasuk*, it is clear that the Jews were freed at night, even though they didn't physically leave until the next day.<sup>4</sup>

2) When is the deadline for fulfilling the *Mitzvah* of ספוד יציאת מצרים? We פסקו like רבי אלעזר בן עזריה that the קרבן פסח needs to be eaten before midnight. According to some פוסקים, the timing of ספוד יציאת מצרים is linked to the timing of קרבן פסח, and therefore, the *Mitzvah* of ספוד יציאת מצרים must also be concluded before midnight<sup>5</sup>.

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1. שמות יב: נא.

2. See the תוספתא quoted below that supports this assumption.

3. שמות יב: ל, לא.

4. רמב"ן שמות פרק יב פסוק נא.

ויהי בעצם היום הזה הוציא ה' - מפני שאמר למעלה (פסוק מב) ליל שמורים הוא לה' להוציאם מארץ מצרים, חזר ופירש כי לא יצאו בלילה כלם מן הארץ, אלא שנתן להם רשות לצאת והיו בני חורין, אבל בעצם היום ההוא יצאו מכל גבול מצרים עם כל צבאותם צבא הנשים וערב רב הנלוים עליהם.

5. מנחת חינוך מצוה כא.

Based on the two points clarified above, there is an ironic twist to the *Mitzvah* of סיפור יציאת מצרים, which forms the basis for my second question.

**Question #2** - Why does the *Mitzvah* of יציאת מצרים apply only during the time that the Jews were still slaves - the night of the 15th before חצות? Since the *Mitzvah* is to imagine ourselves being freed from מצרים, the *Mitzvah* should apparently apply during the time בני ישראל were actually freed – i.e., after חצות. If it is too impractical for the *Mitzvah* to begin after חצות, it should at least continue past this time!

The תוספתא in מסכת פסחים seems to relate to this issue. In this *Braitta*, Beit Hillel and Beit Shammai discuss how much of *Hallel* should be said prior to שילוח עורך.

עד היכן הוא אומר [הלל]? בית שמאי אומר עד אם הבנים שמחה ובית הלל אומר עד חלמיש למעינו מים ... אמרו בית שמאי לבית הלל: וכי כבר יצאו שמזכירין יציאת מצרים? אמרו להם בית הלל אפילו הוא ממתין עד קרות הגבר הרי אילו לא יצאו עד ששעות ביום!<sup>6</sup>

“What part of *Hallel* is recited (before the meal)? בית שמאי say until הבנים הלליה (only the 1st paragraph of *Hallel* which begins with the word שמחה should be said) and בית הלל say until חלמיש למעינו מים (the 2nd paragraph of *Hallel* which begins with the words בצאת ישראל ממצרים should also be said)... בית שמאי said to בית הלל, ‘Did the Jews leave מצרים yet (at this early time of night) which would warrant the saying of מצרים ממצרים?’ בית הלל responded, ‘Even if we wait until morning to recite this paragraph [it still wouldn’t be the time they left מצרים]. The Jews didn’t leave until midday!’”

According to בית שמאי, we should wait to say בצאת ישראל ממצרים until after the meal. Why? They seem to suggest that we should say the paragraph of בצאת ישראל at or near the time the Jews were actually freed i.e. חצות. Since the Afikoman should be eaten right before חצות, the meal will end at about חצות and then the paragraph of בצאת ישראל will be said at the proper time.<sup>7</sup> בית שמאי believe that we shouldn’t say בצאת ישראל earlier in the evening because the Jews had not yet been freed. We, of course, follow בית הלל who reject this reasoning. But בית הלל’s opinion requires explanation. We have a similar question for בית הלל to that which we had before; Why is it acceptable and even preferable to say בצאת ישראל ממצרים early in the evening, before בני ישראל actually left מצרים?

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6. תוספתא פסחים, פרק י'.

7. ראה משניות מבוארת לקהתי שמסביר התוספתא ככה (פסחים פרק י' משנה ו').

## II. מצה - Food of the Future

In order to answer these two questions, let's deal for a moment with one more question. The הגדה tells us:

מצה זו שאנו אוכלים, על שום מה? על שום שלא הספיק בצקם של אבותינו להחמיץ, עד שנגלה עליהם מלך מלכי המלכים, הקדוש ברוך הוא, וגאלם, שנאמר: ולאפו את הבצק, אשר הוציאו ממצרים, עגת מצות, כי לא חמיץ: כי גרשו ממצרים, ולא יכלו להתמהמה, וגם צדה לא עשו להם.

*Why do we eat this matzah? It is because the King of Kings, the Holy one, revealed Himself to our fathers and redeemed them before their dough had time to ferment, as it is written: "They baked the dough which they had brought out of Egypt into unleavened cakes; for they were driven out of Egypt and could not delay, nor had they prepared any provision for their journey."*

Various Rishonim<sup>8</sup> ask that if the reason for eating מצה is to remember the manner in which we left מצרים, why was there an obligation to eat מצה in מצרים on the night of the 15th of ניסן - the night before יציאת מצרים as it says "צלי אש" "צלי אש יציאת מצרים before as it says "צלי אש" - and they hadn't yet left מצרים in a hurry - בחפזון - and they hadn't yet baked the מצה on the way out! What possible reason could there have been to eat the מצה before the redemption actually occurred? Rav Yosef Kimchi quoted by the אבודרהם offers the following answer: ולכן פירש רבי יוסף: קמחי שמה שנצטוו על המצות קודם לכן היה על שם העתיד. שהשם יודע העתידות ידע שהיה - על שם העתיד *The Mitzvah* was to eat the Matzah before בחפזון - because of what would happen in the future. In a sense, the Jews were commanded to act out the redemption before it actually happened. We can elaborate and suggest that by eating the Matzah the night before יציאת מצרים, the Jewish nation was declaring that they believed with complete certainty that they would be redeemed the next morning. עם ישראל understood that the Matzah they ate that night, before they left מצרים, was a harbinger of their redemption. And perhaps it was also the cause for their redemption. Their ability to visualize themselves leaving מצרים even when they were still in the heart of their oppressor's land was the key to their survival. Even in the midst of the darkness, they saw the rays of light. In short, their בטחון and אמונה in their own redemption enabled them to achieve that redemption. We learn from this that the key to Jewish survival is our unshakeable belief in our future.

## III. Imagination - אבות ובנים

Perhaps now we can answer our two earlier questions. The first question we asked was why is this the only *Mitzvah* that requires us to use our imagination - to visualize an event that is not actually happening right now? The answer is that this is exactly what ישראל did in מצרים on the night of פסח. While they ate

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8. אבודרהם על הגדה של פסח ד"ה רבן גמליאל מצה זו שאנו אוכלין וכו'. "על שם שלא הספיק בצקם של אבותינו להחמיץ יש לשאול כי צוי אכילת מצות לא היה מטעם שלא החמיץ בצקם כי קודם לכן צוה לאכול מצות בסתם ולא אמר טעם לדבר."

the מצה that night, they **imagined** and envisioned themselves with great clarity leaving מצרים. Just as they used their **imagination** to visualize an event that was not actually happening at the moment, so too we must use our **imagination** to visualize an event that is not happening right now. The only difference between our respective “imaginings”, is the point of view - while the Jews in מצרים needed to conjure the future, we need to conjure the past.

This also answers our second question. Why does the obligation of ספור יציאת מצרים - of imagining ourselves being freed - end (according to some) at חצות? The answer is because in מצרים, the night of פסח - until חצות only - was characterized by imagination. But after חצות when בני ישראל were actually freed, there was no longer any need for imagination because freedom had already become a reality! Likewise, the חייב to use our imagination on this night only applies until חצות as well. Therefore, our חייב of ספור יציאת מצרים - הא בהא תליא - our חייב of ספור יציאת מצרים ends at the time that the actual redemption began.

#### IV. חייב אדם לראות את עצמו כאילו הוא יצא ממצרים - A Two Step *Mitzvah*

But perhaps we can take this a step farther. Perhaps our point of view is indeed required to be the same as the Jews in מצרים. In order to properly fulfill the *Mitzvah* of חייב אדם לראות את עצמו מוציא, we need to relive the process of freedom in the same way בני ישראל did. Just as it was necessary for בני ישראל to imagine themselves leaving מצרים even before they actually did, even when they were still slaves, we need to do that as well. We can suggest therefore that there are **two steps** to the *Mitzvah* of חייב אדם לראות את עצמו מוציא.

The **first step** is to imagine ourselves as slaves in מצרים who have a steadfast and profound belief in our imminent freedom. This first step transports us back to the time before בני ישראל were free. We learn how to believe in our freedom even when it is not yet actualized. And this leads to the second step. The **second step** is to relive the experience of יציאת מצרים. This step transports us to after חצות and to בעצם היום הזה - to the day of the 15th - where we relive the moment of actually becoming free. The first step is a prerequisite for the second. First, we need to strengthen our אמונה to the point that even in times of darkness - גלות - we can see the light - just as כלל ישראל did on that night - and only then can we truly relive the actual גאולה.

Now we have another reason why the חייב of ספור יציאת מצרים ends at חצות. The main עבודה of the night is to visualize גאולה even before it happens because ultimately this is the key to our redemption. This skill can only be developed on the night of the 15th while we are still in a state of slavery.

This could be the explanation for בית הלל in the תוספתא mentioned earlier.

אמרו להם בית הלל אפילו הוא ממתין עד קרות הגבר הרי אילו לא argued back: בית הלל!  
"Even if we waited until morning to recite this paragraph [it still wouldn't be the time they left מצרים]. The Jews didn't leave until midday!"  
בית הלל is saying that the point is to say before בצאת ישראל ממצרים they were free as this expresses our confidence in our redemption - which ultimately leads to our redemption.

## V. בכור - A Symbol of the Future

The theme of belief in our future and in our redemption can be found in another aspect of יציאת מצרים בני ישראל. חצות - which was also the beginning of בכורות. The entire process of the עשר מצות culminated with the death of the first born מצרים. Why was this plague chosen to be the "grand finale"? What is so significant about the first born children?

We can suggest that for a parent, the first born child represents the future. Once a first child is born, a person's future unfolds before him, extending for untold years and generations. Perhaps for this reason a בכור is entitled to פי שנים - a double portion of inheritance. One portion is for the בכור himself and one portion is for the next generation. It is also interesting that the שורש of the word בכור is ב-כ-ר. The numerical value of each letter is 2, 20, 200 respectively. Each letter represents the second level - not one, but two, not ten, but twenty etc. A בכור is the beginning of the second generation and as such the beginning of the future as well.

מכת בכורות therefore is a fitting end to פרעה's mastery. As מכת בכורות transpired, not only was מצרים of the present being toppled; מצרים of the future was being destroyed as well. All of פרעה's hopes and dreams vanished into the night. And on that night, as the future of מצרים crumbled before our eyes, our own future rose up before us - our בכורים were spared. Our future was secure. Our future was beginning now. A night that was characterized by our אמונה in our future and in our redemption, as expressed through our eating of the Matzah, ended with the salvation of our future symbolized by our בכורים.

## VI. אמונה - Put It Into Practice

To conclude, there are those that frame the סדר in the following way: Prior to שולחן ערוך, we focus on יציאת מצרים - our past redemption. After שולחן ערוך, we focus on the גאולה העתידה - our future and ultimate redemption.

According to what we have discussed, we understand this framework even better. Immediately prior to חצות we eat the אפיקומן. By this time we have accomplished the main *Mitzvah* of יציאת מצרים. We have visualized

ourselves leaving מצרים. And perhaps more importantly, through the *Mitzvah* of ספור יציאת מצרים we have also acquired within ourselves a new ability - to see redemption even in a state of גלות. The moment after חצות, as we begin the second half of the Hagadah, we immediately put this new found ability to use. We confront our own state of גלות and we begin to beseech and praise ה' for the future גאולה. Even though we are currently in גלות, we believe באמונה שלמה that the גאולה will come, and ultimately, this אמונה is the catalyst of our redemption.

May we all emerge from the Seder with a refreshed belief in the years ahead and may the future hold for our families and all of *Klal Yisrael* many years of health, happiness and celebration. **חג שמח!**

## A Tale of Two *Banim*

Rabbi Asher Teigman

As the *Baal Haggadah* relates, the Torah teaches us that, in the context of telling over the story of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, there are four different types of children that we may encounter. Each child has a unique perspective and unique abilities, and the Torah teaches us how we are to interact with each one of them.

It is interesting to note, however, that in two out of the four instances the *Baal Haggadah* diverges from the dialogue prescribed in the Torah.

In *Shemos* 12:26-27, the Torah tells us that when your children ask, “*Mah ha'avodah hazos lachem?*,” “What is this service to you?,” the proper response is “*V'amartem zevach Pesach hu l'Hashem...*,” “And you shall say, ‘it is a Pesach feast-offering to Hashem...’ ” The *Baal Haggadah* tells us that this represents the dialogue with the *Rashah*.

In *Devarim* 6:20-21, the Torah tells us, “*Ki yish'alchah vincha machar leimor mah ha'eidos v'hachukim v'hamishpatim asher tzivah Hashem Elokeinu eschem?*,” “If your child asks you tomorrow, saying, ‘What are the testimonies and the decrees and the ordinances that Hashem, our G-d, commanded you?’ ” “*V'amartah l'vincha avadim hayinu l'Pharoh b'Mitzrayim vayotzieinu Hashem miMitzrayim b'yad chazakah,*” “You shall say to your child, ‘We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, and Hashem took us out of Egypt with a strong hand.’ ” The *Baal Haggadah* attributes this discussion to that of the *Chacham*.

As we will see, the *Baal Haggadah* does not exactly follow the Torah's instruction and the questions I will try to address are:

- What prompted the *Baal Haggadah* to diverge from the Torah's prescription?
- What is the *Baal Haggadah* trying to teach us?

Let us first analyze the *Rashah*. The answer given to the *Rashah* that is found in the Haggadah is the same answer given to the *Sheaino Yodeah Li'Sheol*, “*V'higaditah l'vincha bayom hahu leimor, 'ba'avur zeh asah Hashem li b'tzeisi miMitzrayim,*” “And you shall tell your son on that day, saying, ‘It is because of this that Hashem acted on my behalf when I left Egypt,’ ” instead of “*V'amartem zevach Pesach hu l'Hashem...*”

Rav Yonasan Sacks quotes the *Peirush HaGrah* who explains that if one takes a closer look at the dialogue with the *Rashah* as it is found in the Torah he will see that there is one very important distinction in the response to the *Rashah* in contrast to the other three children. Whereas in the case of the other three sons,

the Torah tells us to respond directly to them (*v'amartah l'vincha, v'higaditah l'vincha, v'amartah eilav*), in the case of the *Rashah* the Torah simply says "*V'amartem*", "And you (plural) shall say." This explicit omission indicates that the Torah is not giving us a response to the *Rashah* but rather the Torah is giving us a topic to discuss amongst ourselves. The *Rashah's* question is completely rhetorical in nature and meant merely to mock the *mitzvos* performed at the Seder. So, in essence, the *Rashah* is not asking any question at all and, consequently, the Torah does not give us a unique response. Therefore the *Baal Haggadah* tells us that we ignore the *Rashah* and instead respond to others at the table who haven't asked any question as the Torah tells us to respond to the son who does not know how to ask a question.

The answer to the *Chacham* as it is written in the Haggadah is not found anywhere in the Torah. The Haggadah says to answer, "*v'af attah emor lo k'hilchos haPesach, ain maftirin achar ha'pesach afikoman*," "and you shall tell him the laws of Pesach, one is not allowed to eat an afikoman ("dessert") after the Korban Pesach," as opposed to "*avadim hayinu...*" At face value, the answer in the Haggadah seems to be a peculiar one. Why should we answer the *Chacham* purely by teaching him that one is not allowed to eat anything after eating the Korban Pesach? One common approach is that since the *Chacham* appears to be asking about all the laws of Pesach we respond by teaching him *all* of the laws of Pesach concluding with one of the last *mishnayos* found in *Meseches Pesachim*, namely, *ain maftirin achar ha'pesach afikoman*.

Rav Avigdor Nebenzahl however has a different interpretation. He begins by analyzing why we are not allowed to eat anything after eating the *Korban Pesach*. The answer lies in the Torah itself in Devarim 16:2-3, as it says, "*v'zavachta pesach l'Hashem...l'maan tizkor es yom tzeischah me'Eretz Mitzrayim kol y'mei chayeichah*," "you shall bring the *korban pesach* to Hashem...so that you will remember the day you left *Mitzrayim* all the days of your life." Rav Nebenzahl explains that the simple understanding of the *pasuk* is that as long as we taste the *Korban Pesach* we will remember *Yetzias Mitzrayim* and, therefore, the taste must remain in our mouths, if not forever, then, for as long as feasibly possible. He goes on to explain that what the *Chacham* is really asking is why are there so many *mitzvos* in the Torah that are meant to remind us of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, such as tefillin, Shabbos, Yom Tov, *kedushas bechoros*, *Korban Pesach*, matzah, chametz, etc. The answer is that Hashem wants us to be reminded constantly throughout the year about *Yetzias Mitzrayim*. This is why we respond to the *Chacham* by saying *ain maftirim achar ha'pesach afikoman* because it is this particular halacha that is representative of the obligation to remember *Yetzias Mitzrayim* all the days of our lives. Just as when we taste something new we lose the previous taste we had in our mouths so too when we are exposed to a new idea we lose focus on what we had on our minds

previously. That is why Hashem gave us so many mitzvos that remind us of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*.

I would like to take this explanation one step further. It is interesting to note that despite how instrumental Moshe *Rabbeinu* was in carrying out *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, there is only one mention of his name in the Haggadah and it appears in the context of being an *Eved Hashem*, “*vaya’aminu b’Hashem u’v’Moshe avdoh*,” “and they had faith in Hashem and in Moshe his servant.” The fact that on this night Hashem transformed us from slaves to *Paroh* to servants of Hashem is in fact the foundation of our *emunah* and the root of the obligation to remember *Yetzias Mitzrayim* each and every day of our lives. What the *Baal Haggadah* is trying to stress is that our task as parents on Seder night is not merely to tell over the facts of *Yetzias Mitzrayim* but to impart to our children the magnitude of this historic event and the need to always be reminded of the ultimate goal. The Seder night provides us with the opportunity to stop, think and internalize the significance of *Yetzias Mitzrayim* and what it means to be a true *Eved Hashem*. May we all be *zocheh* to take the lessons of the Seder and apply them to the everyday.

## The Message of the Ten Plagues

Rabbi Elchanan Dulitz

Every year the account of the plagues that Hashem brought on Egypt raises anew the question of Pharaoh's freedom of choice, due to the oft-repeated expression that the "Hashem stiffened his heart." How can Hashem punish Pharaoh for conduct that Pharaoh was coerced to engage in?

Many answers are offered to resolve this issue. The *Midrash Shemot Rabbah* addresses the issue as follows: During the first five plagues (Exodus 7:22, 8:11, 8:15, 8:28 and 9:7), the Torah writes that **Pharaoh hardened his own heart** (and not that G-d hardened Pharaoh's heart). Commencing with the sixth plague (continuing until the tenth plague) the Torah states "**And the L-RD hardened the heart of Pharaoh**" (Exodus 9:12). Only after Pharaoh chose his path did Hashem get involved. The Midrash understands that Pharaoh had the choice whether to sin but that his punishment, after having chosen to sin, was that he became unable to repent. It is appealing to suggest that Rambam understood this Midrash to be in accord with his own view that human beings have free will, distinguishing between man's original freedom of choice and man's choice to repent. It is only the latter that can, in exceptional circumstances such as Pharaoh's, be taken away.

The one problem with this approach is that if we look at the conclusion of the seventh plague (Exodus 9:35) it says **Pharaoh hardened his own heart** and not that Hashem hardened his heart. Assuming the *Midrash Shemot Rabbah* is correct in its *pshat*, what is unique about the seventh plague when compared to the sixth, eighth, ninth and tenth plagues? Why would Pharaoh have the independent ability to harden his own heart without Divine intervention specifically in connection with the seventh plague?

I would like to suggest an answer to this dilemma. If we look at the plagues as a whole, one could posit a secondary underlying theme. Hashem punished Egypt with plagues that were unique. Each plague had its own miracle that was intended to demonstrate its Divine nature. Since there were plagues that could have been viewed as natural phenomena, Hashem purposefully added additional phenomena to show the plagues were truly of Divine origin.

The first plague, blood, was clearly not a natural phenomenon, so additional phenomena were not needed to demonstrate its Divine origin. The second plague, frogs, could have been construed as a natural frog population explosion; therefore in order to show Pharaoh that this was indeed a divine plague, Hashem asked Pharaoh for a termination time. Pharaoh stubbornly requested another day of pain so he could disprove Hashem. Hashem responded **tomorrow the frogs**

*will die as you requested, to show there is no one like Hashem* (Exodus 8:6). Pharaoh's magicians admitted that the third plague, lice, was *Hashem's finger* (Exodus 8:15), i.e. not natural, so no additional "proof" was necessary. The fourth plague, wild animals, could have been construed as natural, so at the conclusion of this plague Hashem made sure that all the animals disappeared, once again confirming that the plague was Divine. The fifth plague, cattle disease, could have been construed as a natural epidemic, so Hashem made it clear that no Jewish-owned animal would die of this disease. Pharaoh was so shocked by this revelation that the Torah adds an additional pasuk that states *Pharaoh sent out messengers (to confirm that no Jewish animal died) and behold not one Jewish owned animal died.* (Exodus 9:7) The sixth plague, boils, was so powerful that Pharaoh's magicians could not even stand in front of Moshe and Aharon (Exodus 9:11), so no additional "proof" was necessary.

When Hashem brought the seventh plague, He added a new dimension to the punishment. *Whoever fears Hashem and brings his animals and servants inside will be protected from the hail* (Exodus 9:20) - once again the goal was to show Hashem's absolute power. However, this fact was misconstrued by Pharaoh. He understood that Hashem was not all powerful and thought that He was limited in his ability to destroy. Pharaoh felt that there was a glimmer of hope and that he would be able to endure this plague. This may be the reason that Pharaoh was able to harden his own heart without divine intervention unlike the sixth, eighth, ninth and tenth plagues.

Even in our times, Hashem sends messages to us. Chazal tell us that when a person has misfortune or *chas veshalom* is sick, these are warnings from Hashem. However, we are usually too busy to pick up on what is being conveyed. As Pesach approaches, we should take out a little time to think about what is expected of us and what Hashem is trying to convey to us. Good Yom Tov.

## The Seder's Connecting Hook<sup>1</sup>

Jonathan Schloss

Towards the end of the seder, Eliyahu *HaNavi* visits each seder and a short time later (after Hallel) we say “*L’Shana Haba’ah B’Yerushalayim.*” In several instances, *Chazal* mention Eliyahu *HaNavi* and *Yerushalayim* together. However, there is no textual basis for this pairing as Eliyahu and *Yerushalayim* are not referenced together anywhere in Tanach. What is the significance of the relationship between this particular *Navi* and the Holy City?

A clue can be found in Shabbos *HaGadol* – the shabbos that sets the tone for the upcoming *chag*. On the first Shabbos *HaGadol*, on the Tenth of Nissan, each Jewish family audaciously took a lamb in preparation for the upcoming *geula*. When Eliyahu arrives, we will also know that redemption is upon us. In the Haftora for Shabbos *HaGadol*, we are told that Hashem will send “Eliya” as his messenger. The last letter, *Vav*, is missing from Eliyahu’s name. This is a rare occurrence in Tanach – one of five times where Eliyahu’s name is spelled without a *Vav*.

A similar spelling quirk also occurs with Yaakov. Yaakov is spelled with an extra *Vav* five times in Tanach. Rashi explains in *Parshas Bchukosai* that Yaakov “took” Eliyahu’s *Vav*, - the “*Vav Hachibur*”, the “Connecting *Vav*” as collateral to ensure that Eliyahu will come to redeem Yaakov’s children.

We joyously recite “*L’Shana HaBa’ah BiYerushalayim*” at the end of Yom Kippur and at the end of the Seder to express our confidence in the future redemption. Interestingly, *Yerushalayim* is spelled with a *Yud* in the middle - also only five times (it is usually spelled “Yerushalem”). In *Megillas Esther*, for instance, Mordechai is described as a displaced person who never loses sight of where he came from. (“*Asher Hagla M’Yerushalayim . . .*”) *Yerushalayim* is spelled “*maleh*”, with the full *Yud*. According to the Gemara *Yerushalmi*, Rambam and others, the Megilla will always be relevant to us - even after Eliyahu comes and announces the Moshiach. (“*Yerushalayim*” is therefore preserved “*bishleimuta*”.)

In Gemara *Bava Basra*, the coin of *Yerushalayim* is described. It has Dovid *HaMelech* on one side and his son, Shlomo *HaMelech* on the other. What is the significance of this currency? This *matbe’a* (coin) conveys the *teva* (nature) of the city it represents. *Yerushalayim* is a city that seamlessly connects generations to each other in their *Avodas Hashem*. Dovid and Shlomo, though quite different in their personalities, are two sides of the same coin. Similarly, Avraham and

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1. Based in part on a *shiur* heard from R’ Meir Goldwicht, Nissan 5755

Yitzhchak's connection to Hashem and to each other served to connect this world to the Heaven above. The name of the Holy City itself is a compromise composite of inter-generational designations (Avraham named it "*Yireh*" while Shem named it "*Shalem*"). Though different generations may have different perspectives, our unity is worthy of preservation.

Conversely, there is the story of Kamtza and Bar Kamtza (Gemara *Gittin*). According to the *MaHarsha*, these two party-goers were likely a father and son. Where different generations cannot even sit at the same table, *churban* (destruction) is not far off.

As we conclude the seder, hopefully sharing the experience of reliving the *geula* with multiple generations, the *Baal Haggadah* reminds us that Eliyahu's message and *Yerushalayim*'s purpose are one and the same. *V'Heishiv lev avot al banim v'lev banim al avotam.*" As Eliyahu visits our *Sedarim*, may he see genuine inter- and intra-generational unity in purpose and speedily redeem the "Vav" which our father Yaakov is holding on our behalf.

*L'Shana HaBa'ah B'Yerushalayim!*

## ***Achila Gassah Regarding the Korban Pesach: Pesach a Symbol of Freedom***

Rabbi Aryeh Stechler

This article will discuss two opinions on this matter. First we will discuss the *Rishonim* who offer novel readings of these *Gemaros* to fit *Korban Pesach* into the normative rules of *achila gassah*. Secondly, we will highlight *Rishonim* who see *Korban Pesach* as an exception to this rule. And finally, we will suggest why, halakhically and spiritually, the *Korban Pesach* should be a unique mitzvah of *Achila*, possessing its own method of eating.

Judging by the number of *mitzvos* that surround eating, the usual knock on Judaism's obsession with eating is not far off base. However, halacha does not look favorably upon *achila gassah*, gluttonous eating. So much so that if one is stuffed and then tries to eat to fulfill a mitzvah, such as eating Matzah on *Pesach*, one does not fulfill their obligation. Likewise, if one eats an overabundance of food and then eats any prohibited food as *achila gassah*, one does not violate the prohibition of eating that prohibited foods. Eating, from a halakhic standpoint, is defined by eating when one stands to benefit and not when one is completely full (*Yevamos* 40a). However, there is a possible exception to this rule. Two *Gemaros* seem to imply that *korban Pesach* may be eaten even as *achila gassah*. (*Mishneh LeMelech* (*Yesodei* 5:8) thinks eating *bassar bechalav* as *achila gassah* is also *chayav*.)

### **Gemara #1 – *Pesachim* 107b**

The Mishnah in *Arvei Pesachim* (99b) codifies that one may not eat close to Mincha on *Erev Pesach*. One possibility raised by the Gemara is that this refers only to Mincha *Ketana* and is to ensure that the Matzah eaten at the Seder is not eaten as *achila gassah*. The Gemara does not say that one cannot eat to ensure that the *korban Pesach* is not eaten as *achila gassah*. The simple reading of the Gemara would imply that only Matzah cannot be eaten as *achila gassah*, while *korban Pesach* may be eaten in such a sate.

### **Gemara #2 – *Nazir* 23a**

The Gemara quotes the verse (*Hoshea* 14:10) which says, “The ways of Hashem are straight; the righteous will walk them, while the wicked will falter on them.” The Gemara says that this verse refers to two people who eat the *korban Pesach*, one for the sake of the mitzvah and one for the sake of gluttonous eating. However, the Gemara challenges this understanding of the verse. While *achila gassah* is not the preferred way to eat the *korban Pesach*, one still fulfills his

obligation! How can this verse, which speaks of a wicked person, refer to someone fulfilling a mitzvah? The Gemara then offers a totally new explanation of the verse. This Gemara clearly indicates that *achila gassah* is a valid, albeit inferior method of eating the *Pesach*.

### ***Al HaSovah***

Beyond these two *Gemaros*, there is another Halacha about the *korban Pesach*, which seems to indicate that *korban Pesach* may be eaten as *achila gassah*. The *Pesach* must be eaten “*Al HaSovah*” – when one is full. Is this not *achila gassah*? If the Torah commands us to eat the *Pesach* only after eating a full meal and reaching a feeling of being satiated, clearly the normal rule excluding *achila gassah* does not apply to the mitzvah to eat the *korban Pesach*.

### ***Balei HaTosfos***

Most *Rishonim* believe that *korban Pesach* is no different than any other mitzvah of *achila* and is therefore subject to the rule that *achila gassah* is invalid. Rashbam (107b d”h *Oh*) states that the Gemara in *Pesachim* which was only concerned with *achila gassah* for Matzah and not for the *korban Pesach* was merely referring to our time, when the *Pesach* is no longer offered. However, in the times of the Beit HaMikdash of the past and of the future, one cannot eat on *Erev Pesach* for an additional reason - to ensure that the *korban Pesach* as well is not eaten as *achila gassah*.

In order to rebut the proof from the Gemara in *Nazir*, which stated that *achila gassah* is acceptable for the *Pesach*, Rabeinu Tam (*Nazir* 23a d”h *Pesach*) suggests that there are two levels of *achila gassah*. There is a point of eating when one becomes satiated and is no longer hungry. While this level is not an optimal point to perform *mitzvos*, it is still considered *Achila* and eating the *Pesach* or other *mitzvos* at this point is valid. However, after eating more there is a point when eating becomes repulsive and can become detrimental to one’s gastronomical health. This second level of “eating that damages” is the type of eating that is not considered eating for all *mitzvos*, including the *Pesach*. (This second level of *achila gassah* is how it is defined by the Rambam (*Shivas Asur* 2:7) and Shulkhan Arukh (612:6).) When the Gemara in *Nazir* allowed *achila gassah* for the *korban Pesach*, it only allowed eating when one was satiated but did not allow eating when one was repulsed by food.

Along the lines of Rabeinu Tam, Rashbam suggests that the Halacha that the *Pesach* be eaten *Al HaSovah* does not contradict the normal rule of not considering *achila gassah* eating. The Gemara in *Yevamos* 40a states that one would not fulfill the mitzvah of eating a *Korban Mincha* with *achila gassah*. This is true even though the *Korban Mincha* is also required to be eaten *Al HaSovah*. Thus, Rashbam proves that foods eaten *Al HaSovah* still must not be eaten in a detrimental way – *achila gassah*. Thus, *korban Pesach* is no different

from other *mitzvos* and would also not be able to be eaten in such a damaging way. *Al HaSovah* refers to a point when one is almost satiated. *Achila gassah* that is invalid refers to a further point when one has no more *hana'ah* from food, is repulsed by food and/or may even be hurt by eating.

This opinion is codified as Halacha. Today we eat Matzah as the *Afikoman* as a remembrance of the *Pesach*. In *Hilchos Pesach* (476:1), the Rama recommends not eating too much at the meal so that the *Afikoman* will not be eaten as *achila gassah*. Along the lines of Rabeinu Tam, the Mishnah Berurah (6) quotes that if the *Afikoman* is eaten when one is repulsed by food, then one does not fulfill the mitzvah of *Afikoman*. If one has no desire to eat more, than although he fulfills the mitzvah, it has not been performed in an optimal way (Rokeich 283 quoted by the Beis Yosef 477). The Mishnah Berurah explains that although *Pesach* is eaten *Al HaSovah*, one still needs to feel some desire to eat.

### **A New Approach**

However, it is possible to suggest that the simple reading of these two *Gemaros* reveal that *korban Pesach* is a unique mitzvah of *Achila*. While normally Halacha does not recognize *achila gassah* as *Achila*, with regard to eating the *korban Pesach achila gassah* is acceptable.

Rashbam believed that the law that *korban Pesach* must be eaten *Al HaSovah* does not indicate any special law of eating, since other *Korbanos* contain this same law. He pointed to the *Korban Mincha*, which must be eaten *Al HaSovah*, but cannot be eaten as *achila gassah*. This linkage of *Al HaSovah* of *korban Pesach* with the *Al HaSovah* of *Korban Mincha* is based on the comments of Rashi (Rashbam's grandfather). Rashi (*Pesachim* 76a d"h *Ein*) says that the *korban Pesach* must be eaten *Al HaSovah* for the same reason all *korbanos* must be eaten *Al HaSovah*. The Torah says *korbanos* must be eaten "*LeMashcha*" like kings eat. According to Rashi, the law of *Al HaSovah* for *Pesach* is identical with the law of *Al HaSovah* for all *korbanos*. (*Tosfos Pesachim* 70a based on the Yerushalmi argue that *Al HaSovah* of *Pesach* is less than other *Korbanos* and only a rabbinic decree to prevent a hungry eater from breaking bones.)

However, the Mechilta (*Pischa* 6) offers another source for the law of *Al HaSovah* regarding *Pesach*. The Torah stipulates that *Pesach* should be eaten with Matzah and Maror. According to the Mechilta this means that the *Pesach* should be eaten *Al HaSovah*. *Pesach* is eaten specifically in an overstuffed sandwich suggesting it is part of a huge meal. This new and individual source opens the door to suggest that perhaps *Al HaSovah* of *korban Pesach* is qualitatively different than the *Al HaSovah* of other *korbanos*.

It is possible to suggest that the *Al HaSovah* regarding *korban Pesach* refers to a greater level of satiation than for other *Korbanos*. The Gemara 70a (and

Rambam *Pesach* 8:3) codify that one should eat the *Chagigah* before the *Pesach* in order to eat the *Pesach Al HaSovah*. According to Rashi this law is very puzzling! The *Chagigah* has to be eaten *Al HaSovah* in the same exact way that the *Pesach* has to be eaten *Al HaSovah*. Shouldn't one eat the *Pesach* before the *Chagigah* to fulfill the mitzvah of *Al HaSovah* of the *Chagigah*?

This seems to indicate that the *Al HaSovah* of *Pesach* is a further level of satiety than a regular *Korban*. The *Chagigah* should not be eaten on an empty stomach. But the *Pesach* must be eaten after more eating - at the point of satiety or right at the point when one is full. This special and unique law of *Al HaSovah* of the *Pesach* requires that the *Pesach* must specifically be eaten after the *Chagigah*.

This is why the Gemara in *Pesachim* is only worried about *achila gassah* regarding Matzah and why the Gemara in *Nazir* indicates that while not preferable, *achila gassah* is valid regarding the *Pesach*. Halacha normally does not consider gluttonous eating to be *Achila*. However, since the *Pesach* must be eaten after an abnormal and abundant amount of eating, the Torah did not invalidate a *Pesach* eaten as *achila gassah*. (Sefas Emes in *Nazir* suggests that *achila gassah* is acceptable for *Pesach* only, because there is a *chiyuv* not to create *Nosar*.)

Why does this unique form of eating exist for the *korban Pesach*? Why would gluttonous eating, so antithetical to the Torah's values of refinement and moderation, be acceptable for the *Pesach*? *Al Pi Drush*, I thought of an approach based on a story related to me by an American Jewish soldier who merited liberating a Nazi death camp. Upon finding his fellow Jews emaciated to the point of near death, he handed over all his food immediately to them. Unfortunately, one Jew died shortly afterward due to eating the soldier's American chocolate bar. The inmate could not digest the chocolate. One of the natural experiences of going from *Avdus* to *Cheirus* is eating beyond what the body is used to. While this is certainly damaging and gluttonous, it is a normal part of the celebration of *Cheirus*. We eat whatever we can now get our hands on, despite how harmful that may be to our bodies. Ravyah (*Pesachim* 525) writes that eating the *Pesach* and *Afikoman Al HaSovah* is a sign of *Cheirus* (although he links it elsewhere with other *korbanos Al HaSovah*). Throughout the year, *achila gassah* is not recommended and is not allowed in the performance of eating *mitzvos*, because eating is done to nourish and benefit the body. However, eating on the night we celebrate our freedom is one time we allow ourselves to eat as newly freed slaves, eating for the sake of partying and experiencing total freedom. For this reason, as a sign of our true *Cheirus*, the *Pesach* must be eaten *Al HaSovah* and may be eaten even as *achila gassah*.

## “Bless You”- the Text to be Used When Performing *Mitzvos*

Rabbi Brian Gopin

When reciting *berachos* on the *mitzvos* we do, there are usually two distinct formulations used by Chazal: אשר קדשנו במצוותיו וצוונו ל... which blesses Hashem for commanding us to perform the specific *mitzvah* at hand (i.e. Who commanded us to sit in a sukkah or wear tzitzis) and אשר קדשנו במצוותיו וצוונו על... which, at first glance, blesses Hashem in a more general fashion as the One who commanded regarding the *mitzvah* at hand – and not directed at the specific obligation.

The Gemara in פסחים ז. discusses these two texts in the context of the *beracha* one recites when performing the *mitzvah* of ביעור חמץ, and although there is a disagreement amongst the Amoraim whether על ביעור refers to the future (that one will burn the *chametz* in the future) or the past (that the *chametz* was already burned, in which case this would not be an appropriate text), the Gemara concludes that one should say על ביעור חמץ and not לבעור חמץ. Tosfos struggle to define an exact formula by which one can follow to decide whether the *beracha* to be made on a specific *mitzvah* should contain על or ל and conclude by quoting the ר"י who was not able to come up with an exact definition (לא מצא טעם לכל) (הברכות). However, most of the other Rishonim attempt to give some guidance on this issue and in this essay we will analyze four of those opinions<sup>1</sup> to see if there is any insight one can gain into certain *mitzvos* based on the *beracha* that is made.

**Opinion #1:** The רא"ש פסחים א"י quotes the opinion of **רבינו תם**:

ומה שחלקו במטבע ברכות יש מהן שתיקנו בעל ויש מהן שתיקנו בלמ"ד ר"ת ז"ל היה נותן טעם לדבר דכל מצות דנעשות מיד שייך לברך עליהן על כגון על מקרא מגילה על הטבילה על נטילת ידים על הפרשת תרומה על אכילת מצה על אכילת מרור אבל להניח תפילין להתעטף בציצית ולישב בסוכה יש בהן שיהיו והלשון מורה על כך להיות מעוטר בתפילין ולהיות עטוף בציצית ולישב בסוכה לאכול ולטייל כל היום

תם classifies *mitzvos* in two different ways – those *mitzvos* where the *beracha* is immediately followed by the act of the *mitzvah* (מעשה מצוה) as well as the fulfillment of that *mitzvah* (קיום המצוה) in which case one will say על and those *mitzvos* where the act of the *mitzvah* follows the *beracha* but the fulfillment of the *mitzvah* extends for a longer period of time where one will use

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1. See נחל איתן סי' ה סע"ג who brings ten different opinions in the Rishonim and discusses at length the ramifications of each

ל<sup>2</sup>. For example, when one puts on his tzitzis the act of putting on the garment is preceded by a *beracha* but the fulfillment of that *mitzvah* continues for a much longer period, namely, the time that he continues to wear that garment. Therefore, according to רבינו תם, it is appropriate to use the text להתעטף which connotes the fact that a person is continually wearing the garment. However, when one washes his hands before eating bread there is no extension of the *mitzvah* beyond the initial performance of the *mitzvah* and therefore, the *beracha* requires the על formulation.

**Opinion #2:** The ר"א quotes another opinion, that of ריב"א:

וריב"א היה מחלק דמצוה דאפשר לעשות ע"י שליח מברך על אבל מצוה שהוא בעצמו צריך לעשותה צריך לברך בלמ"ד ועל שופר אנו מברכים לשמוע בקול שופר דלא סגי דלאו איהו שומע ולקרוא את הלל אע"פ דשומע כעונה כמו גבי מקרא מגילה מ"מ מצוה לענות בראשי הפרקי' אע"פ דשומע כעונה. ועל הטבילה אע"ג דטבילת טמאים א"א לעשות ע"י שליח כיון דטבילת כלים אפשר לקיים ע"י שליח לא פלוג. גם משום דטבילת גרים שהיא לאחר הטבילה. ועל נטילת לולב לפי שפעמים מברך אחר שיצא בו שכבר נטל לא שייך לברך ליטול משום דלהבא משמע והיינו נמי טעמא דעל נט"י.

שליח ריב"א is of the opinion that any *mitzvah* which can be done through a שליח requires a *beracha* of על as opposed to a *mitzvah* which must be done by the person himself which should use the ל text. For example, the *mitzvah* to hear the shofar can only be done by the person performing the *mitzvah*, so the *beracha* we recite is לשמוע קול שופר as opposed to the *mitzvah* of מקרא מגילה the text of the *beracha* uses על since the *mitzvah* is usually performed via שליח. The ל formulation is more focused on the person performing the *mitzvah* unlike the על text which is focused on the *mitzvah* itself (and is more appropriate for a שליח who is not fulfilling his own obligation). The ריב"א adds that any *mitzvah* which is begun prior to the recitation of the *beracha* is accompanied by an על *beracha* such as על נטילת לולב where the individual takes the לולב prior to reciting the *beracha*.

**Opinion #3:** The ריטב"א quotes the opinion of the רמב"ן who says that any *mitzvah* which has begun before the *beracha* is made must be accompanied by a

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2. See רבינו תם who quotes the מאירי who had a different understanding of קיים המצוה – namely, that when the actual act continues (and not the קיים המצוה) then the *beracha* will require ל. With tzitzis, tefillin and sukkah the actual act of the *mitzvah* (wearing the tzitzis and tefillin and sitting in the sukkah) is extended unlike the *mitzvah* of mezuzah where the act is completed immediately but the fulfillment of the *mitzvah* continues throughout his occupancy in the house. According to the understanding of the מאירי one would recite על קביעת מזוזה while according to the understanding brought above, one would say לקבוע מזוזה.

*beracha* with the text על, however, any other *mitzvah* must be evaluated as follows: if the *mitzvah* is an obligation on the one fulfilling the *mitzvah* then the *beracha* is ל even if that *mitzvah* can be performed by a שליח – such as נרות חנוכה. But a *mitzvah* which is not obligatory upon the person requires a *beracha* of על – such as שחיטה. In addition, a *mitzvah* which can be performed by someone else even if there is no explicit appointment of a שליחות – such as ביעור חמץ ומקרא מגילה – such a *mitzvah* will be accompanied by an על *beracha*.

**Opinion #4:** The fourth and final opinion to be discussed here is that of the רמב"ם in הלכות ברכות י"א-ט"ו:

כל העושה מצוה בין שהיתה חובה עליו בין שאינה חובה עליו אם עשה אותה לעצמו מברך לעשות, עשה אותה לאחרים מברך על העשייה. כיצד לבש תפילין מברך להניח תפילין, נתעטף בציצית מברך להתעטף...וכן אם קבע מזוזה לביתו מברך לקבוע מזוזה, עשה מעקה לגגו מברך אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו לעשות מעקה, הפריש תרומה לעצמו מברך להפריש...אבל אם קבע מזוזה לאחרים מברך על קביעת מזוזה, עשה להם מעקה מברך על עשיית מעקה, הפריש להם תרומה מברך על הפרשת תרומה, ...היתה חובה ונתכוון להוציא עצמו מידי חובה ולהוציא אחרים מברך לעשות, לפיכך הוא מברך לשמוע קול שופר. נטל את הלולב מברך על נטילת לולב שכיון שהגביו יצא ידי חובתו, אבל אם בירך קודם שיטול מברך ליטול לולב כמו לישב בסוכה.

In contrast to the other opinions, the רמב"ם distinguishes between the obligations: when one performs a *mitzvah* to fulfill his own obligation he recites the *beracha* ל but when one performs a *mitzvah* on behalf of another individual he uses the על text. Therefore, according to the רמב"ם if one is affixing his own mezuzah he will recite the *beracha* לקבוע מזוזה, but, if he is putting up a friend's mezuzah he will recite the *beracha* על קביעת מזוזה.

To further explain the opinions mentioned above, let us apply their logic to two specific *berachos*, the *beracha* on שחיטה and the *beracha* made on ישיבת סוכה. According to תם רבינו, the *beracha* on שחיטה will be על השחיטה since the slaughtering of the animal is a one-time act while the *mitzvah* of סוכה has an extended fulfillment (קיום) which requires the *beracha* of לישב בסוכה. According to the opinion of the ריב"א the שחיטה can be done by a שליח and so the *beracha* will be in the form of על while the *mitzvah* of סוכה cannot be performed by an agent so the *beracha* will be לישב בסוכה. According to the רמב"ן, the *mitzvah* of סוכה is an obligation on the individual and so, the *beracha* will be לישב בסוכה, as opposed to שחיטה where there is no obligation per se to slaughter the animal (i.e. the person is not obligated to eat the meat), the *beracha* will be על השחיטה. According to the רמב"ם, since the person himself must sit in the סוכה the *beracha* will be לישב בסוכה. In contrast, the *beracha* for שחיטה according to the logic of the רמב"ם should depend on whether the person is slaughtering the animal for himself or for others only – if for himself he should recite the *beracha* of לשחיט,

but, if he is slaughtering for others he should recite על השחיטה. However, the רמב"ם writes that since there is no obligation to eat the meat and therefore, no obligation to slaughter the animal, the *beracha* to be recited is על השחיטה even if he is slaughtering the animal for his own use (see the ראב"ד who questions this conclusion).

Following the reasoning mentioned above, we can explain the proper *beracha* that should be made on the eating of matzah and maror on the night of the Seder. According to רבינו תם (like whom we paskan) the proper *beracha* should be על (מצה או מרור) since there is no extension of the קיום המצוה – namely, once a person swallows the matzah or maror he has fulfilled his obligation. According to the ריב"א since this *mitzvah* cannot be performed by a שליח one should recite the *beracha* לאכול המצה and according to the רמב"ן since this is an obligation on the individual one would recite the same text.

According to the רמב"ם, since the person is performing the *mitzvah* on his own behalf he should recite the *beracha* לאכול המצה – however, the רמב"ם writes in מגיד that the *beracha* one recites is על אכילת מצה and although the מגיד attempts to explain the opinion of the רמב"ם he concludes that his opinion is quite difficult to understand given that the רמב"ם should apparently have required the ל formulation.<sup>3</sup>

### The *Mitzvah* of קידוש השם

The פתחי תשובה יורה דעה ס"ל קנ"ו quotes the opinion of the של"ה that if one is about to be murdered על קידוש השם he should recite the *beracha* לקדש שמו ברבים. Rav Asher Weiss (in his weekly shiur פרשת שמות תשס"ה) asks how it is possible that one could be required to make a *beracha* on such a *mitzvah*: שו"ת רשב"א ס"י י"ח writes that the reason a *beracha* was not instituted on the *mitzvah* of צדקה is that perhaps the poor person will not accept the money and the *beracha* that the giver will make will be a ברכה לבטלה. Rav Weiss asks that this should be the same issue when it comes to the *mitzvah* of קידוש השם; perhaps after the martyr makes the *beracha* the killer will change his mind and decide not to kill the person thereby making the *beracha* לבטלה. If so, why was a *beracha* ever instituted in such a case? Perhaps we can answer by saying that once the person decides that he will die על קידוש השם he is in a position to fulfill the *mitzvah* even if in the end, the killer does not go through with the murder. The fact that a

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3. See נחל איתן who says that the *mitzvah* of מצה ומרור already began at the time of the שחיטת קרבן פסח and wherever the person already began the *mitzvah* (such as the נטילת) the text of the *beracha* will be על.

person is willing to give up his life for the name of Hashem is enough to fulfill the *mitzvah* and require a *beracha* per the opinion of the של"ה.

What can be asked on this opinion, however, is why the של"ה uses the text of על קידוש השם and not לקדש שמו ברבים. This text (using ל and not על) makes sense according to most of the opinions mentioned above – it is an obligation upon the individual (רמב"ן), he is performing the *mitzvah* himself (רמב"ם), and it cannot be done through שליח (ריב"א) – but according to רבינו תם whose opinion we follow, the *beracha* should have been על קידוש השם since the fulfillment of this *mitzvah* has no extension – the קיום המצוה does not extend beyond the original act. Once the person has been murdered he has completed the *mitzvah* and as such this *mitzvah* should be treated like the *mitzvos* of שחיטה and מצה.<sup>4</sup> To answer this question I believe one can say that the *mitzvah* of קידוש השם actually extends beyond the actual act of murder – when one dies in the name of Hashem that person is remembered for his heroic act far beyond the day that he is murdered and for this reason one can say לקדש שמו ברבים even according to רבינו תם since the קיום המצוה is extended. Whenever that individual is mentioned in the context of his murder there is a fulfillment of the *mitzvah* of קידוש השם thus requiring the ל formulation according to רבינו תם.

#### The Mitzvah of הפרשת תרומות ומעשרות

The שלחן ערוך אורח חיים סי' תעה, when discussing the laws of the Pesach seder, says that after concluding *Maggid* one should wash his hands, take the matzah and recite the *beracha* על אכילת מצה (as mentioned above, the halacha is according to the opinion of רבינו תם). On the side of the שלחן ערוך there are questions why the *beracha* on Matzah is על while the *beracha* for הפרשת תרומות ומעשרות according to the להפריש תרומה; aren't the two *mitzvos* similar in that once the act of the *mitzvah* is performed the *mitzvah* is completed and the על formulation should be used for both *mitzvos*. The נתיב חיים answers that since nowadays is only מדרבנן the שלחן ערוך wanted to make a distinction between the two *mitzvos* by changing the text of the *beracha* – by making the *beracha* on הפרשת תרומות ומעשרות different, a person will realize that the *mitzvah* is only מדרבנן.

Perhaps we can give a different answer for the opinion of the שלחן ערוך to explain the difference in *berachos*. The ספר המצוות רמב"ם (see עשה קכו) counts the *mitzvos* of וחלה מעשר וחלה מעשר as three separate *mitzvos* even though there are two parts to each *mitzvah*, namely, the separating of the תרומה

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4. Afterwards I saw that the קרבן נתנאל אורח חיים asks the same question on the של"ה. See נחל איתן who gives a different answer to this problem.

(מתינה) תרומה ומעשר (the *תרומה ומעשר*) and the giving of the (הפרשה) (what we call the *הפרשה*) ומעשר. According to the רמב"ם, although these *mitzvos* require two actions, those actions are not two separate commandments, rather, they are two conditions for fulfilling the *mitzvah*. However, the רמב"ן (שרש י"ב) argues with the רמב"ם and believes that each act should be counted as a separate *mitzvah* – there is one *mitzvah* which requires us to ensure that the food is no longer טבל and another *mitzvah* that we are required to give that food to the לוי or כהן. According to the רמב"ן it is understandable that the text of the *beracha* would be על הפרשת תרומה; since the *mitzvah* is accomplished by separating the תרומה ומעשר there is no extension of the fulfillment of the *mitzvah* and the *beracha* should use the text of על. However, according to the opinion of the רמב"ם, the *mitzvah* does not end until the food is given to the לוי or כהן, and so, there is an extension of the *mitzvah* beyond the act of separating the food which requires the *beracha* of ל according to רבינו תם (just like the *mitzvah* of סוכה where the fulfillment of the *mitzvah* extends beyond the initial act of the *mitzvah* and one uses the ל formulation)<sup>5</sup>.

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5. See footnote 310 to רבינו תם פסחים א: who says that this is in fact the opinion of רבינו תם (that the *mitzvah* has two separate parts as mentioned above).

## The Heavenly Secrets of יעלה ויבא

Dr. Yosi Fishkin

Over the course of *Pesach*, we recite the יעלה ויבא over 30 times during the *Amidah* and *Birchas Hamazon*. יעלה ויבא begins by enumerating eight methods of approaching *Hashem*: ויבא, ויגע, ויראה, וירצה, וישמע, ויפקד, ויזכר. The *GR"A* (*Biur HaGR"A, Orach Chayim 428*) explains that as a result of our sins, *Hashem* is separated from us by the seven heavens, and the purpose of the יעלה ויבא is to daven so that our *tefillos* should break through all of these barriers.

While the *GR"A* elaborates somewhat on the meaning of this cryptic statement, it is *Rav Eliyahu Dessler* (*Michtav M'Eliyahu, Chelek Gimel*) who provides us with a fuller understanding. Rav Dessler credits the *GR"A* with revealing a great secret to us, and that without him, we would still be ignorant of the true meaning behind the יעלה ויבא.

The *Gemara* in *Chagiga* 12b discusses the nature of the heavens<sup>1</sup>. While Rav Yehuda holds that there are two heavens<sup>2</sup>, Reish Lakish describes seven heavens: זבול, מכון, ערבות, וילון, רקיע, שחקים, מעון, זבול, מכון, ערבות. These upper worlds/ heavens are all steps in the revelation of *Hashem's* presence, with each higher world characterized by a greater manifestation of the *Shechinah*. Mankind is endowed with the special ability to perceive these upper worlds. We can do this, since each higher world is not physically farther away from us; rather, our perception of these higher worlds is found progressively deeper inside our hearts. Each of these worlds has a significance to itself, but also serves as a barrier between us and the total experience of *Hashem's* presence.

*Tefillah* can reach different levels, corresponding to a person's spiritual level and consequent level of *kavanah*. When a person davens with increasing levels of *kavanah*, his *tefillos* are capable of reaching higher levels. The higher the level our *tefillos* reach, the greater the chance our *tefillos* will be successful. The significance of יעלה ויבא is that we are davening that our *tefillos* should penetrate all the barriers between us and *Hashem*, reaching ever higher spiritual levels, and thus have a greater chance of being successful.

The eight methods of approach listed in יעלה ויבא correspond to the journey our *tefillos* take through the seven heavens<sup>3</sup>.

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1. The Hebrew word "שמים" will be translated as "Heaven" for the sake of simplicity and consistency, although the Hebrew word שמים definitely has many more implications than the English word Heaven, and vice versa.
  2. Although *Ben Yehoyada* explains that these "two" are actually a way of categorizing the seven heavens of *Reish Lakish* into two groups.

The *GR*"A, with *Rav Dessler's* elaborations, explains each of these seven heavens, and how the words of יעלה ויבא correspond:

(1) וילון (**Curtain**) – This is the first, and lowest barrier between us and Hashem. We have to start off with the desire that we should grow in spirituality. Corresponding to this, we daven יעלה, our *tefillos* should begin their journey by going up. If our *tefillos* are obstructed by this first barrier, their journey cannot even begin.

(2) רקיע (**Sky**) – Our physical body is simply a tool we are given and instructed to use in the service of Hashem. A living person is composed of *guf* and *nefesh*, and after a person's lifetime, his *nefesh* returns to the רקיע. Since this level represents the removal of our outer body/physicality, it allows us to concentrate on our true essence. We need to ignore the materialism around us and concentrate on our true spiritual nature. This enables us to become true *Ovdei Hashem*, people who reveal the glory of Hashem through all of our actions. The pasuk ברוך הוא בשם השם, Blessed is he who comes in the name of Hashem, refers to the return of the *nefesh* to this level of heaven. The *shoresh* used is "Ba", an expression of "coming". Consequently, this רקיע is referred to with the word *V'Yavo*, since it is the place to which our *nefesh* returns.

(3) שחקים (**Mills**)<sup>4</sup> – This is the level, according the *Gemara*, where spiritual millstones grind up Manna/ *Mun* and provides it as a reward for the *tzadikim*, who benefit from their closeness to Hashem's presence. The reward of a *tzadik* is described as *Mun*. Just like *Mun* can have any taste, so too everybody perceives the closeness of Hashem differently, based on his or her individual intelligence and effort. The *Gemara* in *Yuma* 85 describes how the *Mun* was a delicious experience for *Tzadikim*, and it appeared right at their doorstep. *Reshaim*, on the other hand, had to travel to find it, and it was not as tasty to them. Everyone works in life, but לפום צערא אגרא – the more work we put in to improve ourselves, the greater the reward we receive. The efforts of work elevate *tzadikim*, but crush *reshaim*. The *Navi* (*Yirmiyahu* 51:9), refers to the שחקים level of heaven, and uses the expression of "נגע" which implies reaching through effort. The corresponding expression is therefore, we will reach, ויגיע. All the work and effort a *tzadik* puts into self-improvement enable him to reach higher levels of spirituality.

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3. The final two approach methods correspond to a single level of heaven, as will be explained.

4. Some translate שחקים as "skies".

(4) **(Abode)**<sup>5</sup> - The *pasuk* in *Devarim* 26:15 states "השקיפה ממעון קדשך מן השמים, וברך את עמך..." "Look down from Your holy abode, from the heaven, and bless Your people." *Hashem* does not limit Himself to a specific location, or abode, in the physical world, since He exists everywhere. He is revealed in specific places in the physical world on the occasions when He chooses to bless His people. The results of those blessings then become manifest in specific locations. The mitzvah of עליה לרגל is described in *Shemos* 23:17 as שלוש פעמים בשנה יראה - three times a year you shall be seen. The *Gemara* in *Chagiga* 2a explains this *pasuk* by saying that the way He comes to see, so He comes to be seen. The simple explanation of this derivation is that this *pasuk* is exempting a person with any degree of blindness from this mitzvah. The deeper explanation is that the same way *Hashem* comes to see His nation and bless them, so too He comes to be seen by them, to cause His name to be blessed. We are required in life to do whatever possible to cause the presence of *Hashem* to be more manifest in this world. The more we are conscious of *Hashem's* presence, the more our actions will be influenced by this knowledge. This enables us to be worthy of *Hashem's* blessing. Since the מעון is described in the *pasuk* as the source of *Hashem's* blessing, and we make ourselves worthy of this blessing by seeing *Hashem's* presence and being seen by Him, we refer to this level with the word יראה.

(5) **(Residence)** - The *shoresh* of זבול is found in *Bereshis* 30:20 when Leah says, "כי הפעם יבולני איש" "Now my husband will take up residence with me". In the time of the *Beis Hamikdash*, *Hashem* displayed His favorable opinion of us by "residing" with us in the *Beis Hamikdash* when we brought the *karbanos*. Nowadays, in the absence of the *Beis Hamikdash*, *Hashem* resides with those who devote themselves to Him in absolute purity with *Mesirus Nefesh*. The *Gemara* in *Menachos* 110b and *Chagigah* 12b states that the *Malach* מיכאל stands in this level and brings a specific type of heavenly sacrifice. The *GR"A* derives from *Tosafos* there<sup>6</sup> that this sacrifice consists of the *neshamos* of all of Israel prior to the *churban*, but after the *churban*, it consists only of the *neshamos* of *tzadikim*, and children who have not yet sinned. These are the only groups of people in our time who can attain the purity of *kavanah* to deem them worthy of *Hashem's* residing with them. יעלה ויבא is located in the *bracha* of רצה, which shares a *shoresh* with וירצה, since this is the *bracha* where we request that our *tefillos* should find favor with *Hashem*. The extent to which we can devote ourselves with *Mesirus Nefesh* in purity determines how well our *tefillos* find favor with *Hashem*, so we say וירצה – help us to purify our *Kavanah* to such an extent that we're on the same level as *tzadikim*, and, consequently, cause *Hashem* to favor us and reside with us.

5. In our version of the *Gemara*, זבול preceeds מעון, but in the *GR"A's* version, these two are reversed.

6. *Ba"CH* also emends the *Gemara* to read in this way.

(6) **מכון (Dwelling Place)**<sup>7</sup> – In *Melachim Aleph*, 8:30, *Shlomo HaMelech* says, "וְיִשְׁמַע אֱלֹהֵי שָׁמַיִם וְשָׁמַעְתָּ וְסָלַחְתָּ:" – "and You should hear in Your dwelling place in Heaven, and You will hear and You will forgive." We see from this pasuk that the root of Hashem listening to our tefillos takes place in His **מכון**, His dwelling place. It's appropriate that the corresponding word for this level in the **יעלה ויבא** is **וישמע**. How do we merit that Hashem listen to our tefillos? The *GR"A* explains that the concept of **מכון** is one of **קביעות** – establishing ourselves in spirituality. The more effort we put into establishing ourselves at all times as spiritual beings, the greater will be our ability to constantly listen to *Hashem*. The better job we do of listening to *Hashem*, the more He will listen to our tefillos.

(7) **ערבות (Plains)**<sup>8</sup> – This is the ultimate, highest level, the world where *Neshamos* are stored. This corresponds to our absolute **דבקות** to the source of our existence. When we perform *mitzvos* truly **לשמה**, with our prime focus being to draw closer to Hashem, with absolutely no ulterior motives, we merit this level. This corresponds to **ויפקד ויזכר**. Both of these words express the same concept, one of remembrance. Everything we do in life gets recorded – **פקידה** – in our *neshamos*. As a result of this record, our *neshamos* attain a certain degree of being remembered – **זכירה** – by *Hashem*. The *Gemara* in *Taanis* 11:1 states that a person's *neshama* testifies about him. The spiritual height that our *neshama* reaches is a direct product of our actions that are recorded within it. Our spiritual level is a product of our physical actions. If our actions in this world are performed with the sole intent of drawing closer to *Hashem*, then our *neshama* can easily find its true place in this highest level.

Therefore, the *tefillah* of **יעלה ויבא** serves as a framework to remind us to (1) desire spiritual growth, (2) remove materialism, (3) work hard to grow spiritually, (4) cause the revelation of *Hashem* in this world, (5) dedicate ourselves as *tzadikim* do, (6) establish our spirituality as a permanent part of ourselves, and (7) draw close to *Hashem*. These are the seven steps our *kavanos* must take, the seven barriers our *tefillos* need to break through, from the first step of being elevated, all the way through the last step of total devotion. Our task is to use **יעלה ויבא** to fulfill its purpose as part of our *Yom Tov* davening. If we keep this heavenly hierarchy in mind for at least some of the 30 plus times **יעלה ויבא** is said over *Pesach*, the spiritual benefits can be incredibly powerful. This will not only enable us to maximize our *Kavanah* during davening, but will also enable us to improve our spiritual standing in this world. This is the goal we can accomplish as we contemplate the higher heavens referred to in the **יעלה ויבא**.

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7. Some translate this as "Arsenal" since punishments for *Reshaim* come from this level.

8. Some translate this as "Sweetness" or "Wide Spaces".

## Hilchos Pesach; B'Inyan Nifsal Me'Achilas Kelev

### הלכות פסח; בענין נפסל מאכילת כלב

ע"פ שיעורים ששמעתי מפי מו"ר הגר"מ וויליג שליט"א<sup>1</sup>

מעורך ע"י ישראל ברוך פינקלשטיין

Dr. Barry Finkelstein

1. "Chometz nukshah" is a mixture in which:

a) the חימוץ process was stopped or impeded or

b) "spoiled chometz" which was never fit to be eaten normally but is suited to be eaten with difficulty<sup>2</sup>.

Because it may be eaten with difficulty, it is prohibited מדרבנן for a Jew to maintain *chometz nukshah* in his possession on פסח lest he come to eat it<sup>3</sup>. If, however, the *chometz nukshah* became נפסל מאכילת כלב before the sixth hour of the day on פסח it may be kept and used on פסח<sup>4</sup>.

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1. This article is based on shiurim I heard from Rabbi Willig and should be used as a guide and not for הלכה למעשה.

For practical halachik questions please consult Rabbi Neuburger.

2. בגמ' פסחים (מג) דן בענין חמץ נוקשה. ופרש"י (ד"ה מאן תנא) "חמץ נוקשה רע וכו' דאינו ראוי לאכילה". ובמ"ב (סי' תמב סק"ב) כ' "חמץ נוקשה אינו עובר עליו משום ב"י וכו' ורק מדרבנן צריך לבערו ונוקשה מקרי דבר שאינו חמץ גמור כמו אותן שהסופרים מדבקיין בו ניירותיהם שעושין מקמח ומים או עיסה שלא נמצא בה עדיין שום סדק רק שהכסיפו פניה או שאינו ראוי לאכילה רק קצת] ודוקא שמעולם לא היה ראוי לאכילה אבל אם נתקלקל בעיניו עד שיפסל מלאכול לכלב וכדלקמן בס"ב]. ובאר יותר בשעה"צ (סק"ג) "דאי אינו ראוי לאכילה כלל אינו בכלל נוקשה דאסרו להשהותו משום דלמא אתי למיכליה [מ"א]". וכ"כ במ"ב (סק"ה) שחמץ נוקשה ראוי לאכילה קצת ולכן אסרו להשהותה דלמא אתי למיכל משא"כ תערובת חמץ ואינו ראוי לאכילה מותר לקיימו בפסח שאין חשש דלמא אתי למיכל.

ובס' הל' פסח לר"ש איידר (הע' לב, לג) באר בשם התפ"י שיש ב' מיני חמץ נוקשה, והם הנוכרים למעלה. וע' שם (בהע' לב) שעיסה שלא החמיץ כ"צ הוא הנקרא שיאור בש"ס.

3. מ"ב (שם).

4. איתא בגמ' (פסחים כא:) "אמר רבא חרכו קודם זמנו מותר בהנאה אפילו לאחר זמנו" ופרש"י (ד"ה לא צריכא) "וכגון שחרכו באור יפה קודם זמנו שבטל טעמו ומראיתו" ובתוס' (ד"ה חרכו) "וכגון שנפסל מלאכול לכלב דבענין אחר לא הוה שרי דומיא דפת שעופשה". וכ' בשו"ע (סי' תמב ס"ב) "הפת עצמה שעופשה ונפסלה מלאכול הכלב ומלוגמא שנסרחה אינו חייב לבער". ופ"י במ"ב (סק"ט) "ודוקא שעופשה קודם זמן איסורו דאם עיפשה אחר זמן איסורו אף שעופשה כ"כ עד שאינו ראוי לכלב מ"מ חייב לבער כיון שנתחייב בה קודם שעופשה". וכ' עוד במ"ב (סק"י) "מלאכול הכלב, דאז אינו חייב בביעור דהוי כעפרא בעלמא אבל אם לא נפסל מאכילת כלב אף שלאדם נתקלקל ואינו ראוי מ"מ עדיין חייב לבער כחמץ גמור מפני שראוי לחמץ בה עיסות אחרות". וכ' בשו"ע (ס"ט) "חמץ שנתעפש

2. The discussion of products, medications and cosmetics etc. is based upon the second definition (above) of *chometz nukshet*.<sup>5</sup> These commercially sold products are usually before the sixth hour on פסח and may therefore be kept and used on פסח. [Regarding ingestion of products and medicines, see below].

All solid products which are not ingested, such as soaps, ointments, creams, powders, cosmetics, shampoos, shoe polishes, hand creams, baby creams, inks and paints are נפסל מאכילת כלב and may be used on פסח.<sup>6</sup>

All lipsticks may be used on פסח.<sup>7</sup> The common practice is to obtain a fresh stick of lipstick for פסח.<sup>8</sup>

Strictly speaking, all toothpastes may be used on פסח.<sup>9</sup>

3. There is a מחלוקת among the פוסקים whether items which are נפסל מאכילת כלב may be ingested on פסח.<sup>10</sup> The halacha follows the פוסקים who prohibit **eating** items which are נפסל מאכילת כלב.<sup>11</sup>

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קודם זמן איסורו ונפסל מאכילת הכלב או ששרפו באש (קודם זמנו) (ר"ן) ונחרך עד שאינו ראוי לכלב או שייחדו לשיבה וטח אותו בטיט מותר לקיימו בפסח". וכ' במ"ב (סקמ"ג) "וה"ה דמותר בהנאה".

ופי' בס' הל' פסח לר"ש איידר (הע' נג) דשאני חמץ מנבילה דאילו בנבילה ושארי איסורים, אם אינו ראוי לאכילת אדם מותר כדתניא (ע"ז ס"ז): "לא תאכלו כל נבילה לגר אשר בשעריך כל הראויה לגר קרויה נבילה שאין ראויה לגר אינה קרויה נבילה" ומקורו בר"ן (ריש פ"ג סד"ה ת"ר הפת) וראייתו "דהא שאור לא חזי לאכילה ואפ"ה אסריה רחמנא מהאי טעמא".

5. כל זה מבואר בס' הל' פסח לר"ש איידר עמ' 17 - 27.

6. כך שמעתי מפי מו"ר שליט"א, וכ"כ בס' הל' פסח לר"ש איידר 25 - 27.

7. ס' הל' פסח לר"ש איידר (הע' קג).

8. ס' הל' פסח לר"ש איידר (הע' קד). וכ' שם "כך יש לנהוג בדברים שמשמשים במשך השנה עם חמץ ונכנס לפה". ושמעתי מפי מו"ר שליט"א שמעיקה"ד א"צ חדש ואעפ"כ כך נהגו הרבה נשים ועצה טובה היא.

9. כ' בס' הל' פסח לר"ש איידר (הע' קח) "אע"פ ששמעתי מפי הגרמ"פ שליט"א דמשחת שיניים נחשבת נפסל מאכילת כלב (ואף אם בולעו אין בזה אחשביה) על מ"ב ס' תמ"ב סקמ"ה] ודוק) מ"מ אמר כיון שאפשר להשיג משחת שיניים בלי אלקאהאל ושאר חשש חמץ אין להשתמש במשחת שיניים שיש בה חשש חמץ וכן שמעתי בשם מו"ר הגר"א קטלר זצ"ל". ושמעתי מפי מו"ר שליט"א שלא הקפיד כ"כ בזה, ומ"מ הוסיף שכדי להוציא את עצמו מכל ספק, מוטב להשתמש באלו שהם "כשרים לפסח" ובפרט מפני שרוב המינים של משחת שיניים מוחזקים הם שאין בהם אלקאהאל.

10. כ' בגמ' (פסחים כא:) (ויע' בהע' 3) "חרכו קודם זמנו מותר בהנאה אפ"ל לאחר זמנו". וכ' בס' הל' פסח לר"ש איידר (הע' סב, סג) "ופליגי הראשונים אי באכילה נמי שרי דכ' הר"ן "בדין הוא דאפ"ל באכילה נמי שרי כיון שיצא מתורת פת קודם שיחול בו איסור חמץ" וכ"כ המאירי וההשלמה, א"כ אמאי לא אמר רבא "מותר באכילה" כ' הר"ן שם "אלא לפי שאין דרך אכילה בלחם חרוך נקט לישנא דמותר בהנאתו דאפ"ל אכיל ליה לאו אכילה היא אלא דמיתהני מיניה. וכ' הרא"ש (פ"ב ס"א) "יש שרוצים לומר לאו דוקא הנאה דה"ה נמי אכילה דעפרא בעלמא הוא. ולא מסתבר דאע"פ דבטלה דעת האוכל אצל כל אדם מ"מ כיון דאיהו קאכיל ליה אסור". ובשו"ע (ס"ט) כ' "מותר לקיימו בפסח" ובמ"ב (סקמ"ג) כ' "וה"ה דמותר בהנאה אבל באכילה אסור מדרבנן עד אחר הפסח ואע"ג דאכילה שאינה ראויה היא דהא נפסל לכל מ"מ כיון שהוא רוצה לאכול אסור דהא אחשביה".

11. מ"ב (שם) וגר"ז (ס' ל"ב) ויד אברהם (יו"ד סי' קנ"ה ס"ג בהג"ה) ושאגת אריה (ס' ע"ה) וכ"מ מחזו"א (או"ח ס' קט"ז סק"ז) ומאג"מ (או"ח ח"ב סי' צ"ב). כל זה בס' הל' פסח לר"ש איידר (הע' ס"ו).

Medicines, however, which contain חמץ and are נפסל מאכילת כלב may be taken on פסח.<sup>12</sup> Similarly, medicines which contain מאכלים אסורים and are נפסל such as gel caps (which contain gelatin) may be taken on פסח and year round.<sup>13</sup>

Vitamins which contain חמץ are also נפסל מאכילת כלב and strictly speaking may be taken on פסח.<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, it is proper to avoid taking vitamins which contain actual חמץ on פסח.<sup>15</sup> Similarly, vitamins which contain מאכלים אסורים and are נפסל מאכילת כלב may be taken year round.<sup>16</sup>

4. Some brands of children's cough medicine contain מאכלים אסורים. These may also be taken on פסח and year round even if sweeteners have been added to make the medicines tasty.<sup>17</sup>

Dime-Tap grape flavored cough medicine contains flavoring which may be a question of ינם. Although strictly speaking it may be used (as explained above), it is preferable to use the one which is cherry flavored (if available) so as to avoid the שאלה.<sup>18</sup>

[Of course, in is a situation of פקוח נפש all authorities agree that all necessary medicines may be taken, no matter what their ingredients are<sup>19</sup>].

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12. כ' בס' הל' פסח לר"ש איידר (הע' סז) "כ' ביד אברהם שם "כשאכלו לרפואה מותר דאז לא שייך לומר דמדאכלי אחשבי דחליו מוכיח עליו שאינו אוכלו מחמת חשיבותו רק משום רפואה" וכ"כ בשד"ח (מערכת יוה"כ ס"ג אות ח' ד"ה ולענין) בשם ערך השלחן וכ"כ באג"מ (או"ח ח"ב סי' צ"ב) בענין רפואה שיש בה חמץ "דכבר נתבטל קודם הפסח משום אוכל, ואחשביה לא שייך בדבר שלוקח לרפואה דאף דברים מרים ומאוסים נוטלין לרפואה". וכ' עוד בס' הל' פסח (הע' עה) "ואף אם נעשה מחמשת מיני דגן נראה דאם הם מרים ואינם ראויים לאכילה כאספארי"ן נפסלים מאכילת כלב. ואף שכתבנו לעיל בהערה סב דפליגי הראשונים בחרכו קודם זמנו אי מותר באכילה וקיי"ל (בהערה סג) דמותר לקיימו אבל באכילה אסור, ה"מ אי כוונתו לאכלו דאחשביה אבל כתבנו לעיל בהערה סז דאחשביה לא שייך בדבר שלוקח לרפואה וע' ביסו"י (ח"ו דף רכ"א)". [וע"ע בהע' 13].

13. כך הוא סתימת הפוסקים המובא בס' הל' פסח לר"ש איידר (הע' עט, פ) וכך שמעתי מפי מו"ר שליט"א. וע' שם שיש חולקים.

14. כך שמעתי מפי מו"ר שליט"א דגם זה לא מיקרי דרך אכילה (ומטעם זה לא מברכים עליהם), ודלא כמש"כ בס' הל' פסח לר"ש איידר (הע' פא) שהתיר בנידון שלנו רק אם הם מרים. פירוש הדברים: באדם חולה, חליו מוכיח עליו שאינו אוכלו מחמת חשיבותו רק משום רפואה ומותר אפ"ל בדאינם מרים, אבל באדם בריא שאוכל וויטאמינים צריכים להיות מרים. ולדעת מו"ר שליט"א גם זה לא מיקרי דרך אכילה ומותר. והוסיף דמ"מ בפסח, אם יש בהם חמץ גמור וא"צ להם כ"כ, יש להחמיר.

15. כך שמעתי מפי מו"ר שליט"א.

16. כך שמעתי מפי מו"ר שליט"א. וההסבר הוא שאין עליהם שם אוכל אלא שם רפואה. [וצ"ע לדעת האוסרים מה הדין בכדורים או וויטאמינים שעשויים ממאכלים אסורים או מחמץ והם מרים, והכניסו טעמים מתוקים שאינם ממאכלים אסורים או מחמץ וכך הם מוכרים אותם, שיש לומר שהמאכל האסור נפסל מאכילת כלב, וזה שהוא טוב למאכל אינו מדברים האסורים].

17. כך שמעתי מפי מו"ר שליט"א.

18. כך שמעתי מפי מו"ר שליט"א. ופשוט הוא.

19. כך שמעתי מפי מו"ר שליט"א.

Some "medicines" (such as Luden's Cough Drops) are sweet tasting and not much different than candy.

Some brands of children's vitamins are often sweet tasting and not much different than candy and may require a ברכה before being eaten. If it contains חמץ it should not be eaten on פסח. If it contains מאכלים אסורים it should not be eaten year round.<sup>20</sup>

5. Medicine tablets which are coated with dextrose are חמץ. Although it is permissible to take coated medicine tablets which contain *chometz* and are sweet tasting on פסח, nevertheless, it is preferable (if possible) to use similar tablets which do not contain חמץ.<sup>21</sup>

Tablets which are coated with dextrose are קטניות and may be taken on פסח.<sup>22</sup>

Therefore, the ingredients of medicines in question should be investigated prior to פסח and a Rav should be consulted.

6. Liquid products are usually a more serious problem. Many liquid products contain grain alcohol in high percentages and grain alcohol may be חמץ גמור.<sup>23</sup>

Ethyl alcohol is often made by fermentation of starch sugars and other carbohydrates. Therefore, it **may** be made from grains which are חמץ. Ethyl alcohol may also be made synthetically or from corn or other legumes and

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20. כך שמעתי מפי מו"ר שליט"א.

21. כ' בס' הל' פסח (הע' עה) ישנם שהצוקר הוא עשוי מחמץ וכן ישנם שמשתמשים בצוקר שקורין maltose שבא משעורים וחשיב חמץ גמור. מש"כ הרמ"א (ס' תס"ז ס"ח) "וצוגר אסור לאכלו אפ"ל להשהותו אסור" איירי היכא שיש חשש שמערבין בו קמח ואין זה נוגע לצוקר שלנו שמוכרים לאכילה דאותם יש להם כתב הכשר (ע' מ"ב שם סקב"ט) או עדים נאמנים שהם כשרים לפסח וכמו שיתבאר לקמן בפ"ג וע' ביסורי ח"ו דף רטו-ריז". וכ' בס' הל' פסח (שם) דבכה"ג יש לשאול שאלת רב.

ושמעתי מפי מו"ר שליט"א להתיר מעיקה"ד שכל שהוא לרפואה אין עליו שם אכילה ונפסלים מאכילת כלב. וזה שלא התיר גם לכתחלה, חשבתי הטעם מפני שיש לחשוש לדעת המחמירים שאם הכדורים אינם מרים אינם נפסלים מאכילת כלב ולכן בדאפשר להשיג כדורים דומים שאין בהם חמץ יש להחמיר לכתחלה. י.ב.פ.

22. כ' בס' הל' פסח לר"ש איידר (שם) שיש מאלו הכדורים "דעשוין הציפוי מסוכר ויש מהם שהצוקר הוא מה שקורין בלע"ז dextrose הבא מקטניות דשרי במקום חולי כמש"כ במ"ב (ס' תנ"ג סק"ז) ומעדני שמואל (ס' קי"ז סקל"ט אות ב') משד"ח בשם שו"ת מהר"ם שיק' (ח"א ס' רמ"א) וע' ברדב"ז (ח"א ס' רמ"א).. ואם אין בו צוקר אלא שהטבליות נעשין בסטארט"ש שמעתי שעל פי רוב הסטארט"ש נעשה מקטניות".

[וע' מה שכתבתי בסוף הע' 13. ונראה דה"ה בנידון זה, דאף מי שיש לו מיחוש בעלמא ואינו חולה ממש, מותר לו לבלוע כדורים שיש בהם קטניות. י.ב.פ.]

23. כ' המ"ב (ס' תמ"ב סק"ד, ומובא בס' הל' פסח הע' פז) "ויין שרף הנעשה מחמשה מיני דגן הסכימו האחרונים דהוי חמץ גמור וגרע מתערובות חמץ".

therefore would not be חמץ.<sup>24</sup> Unless one is certain to the contrary, one must assume that any product containing ethyl alcohol is made from חמץ.<sup>25</sup>

Isopropyl alcohol usually comes from petroleum. It may be used on פסח.<sup>26</sup>

Denatured ethyl alcohol is ethyl alcohol which has had substances added to it to render it unfit for consumption. There are many פוסקים who maintain that it is not considered כלב מאכילת כלב since there are individuals who drink it by diluting it or making other minor improvements to it.<sup>27</sup> Therefore, if a liquid product contains denatured alcohol, it should not be used on פסח and should be sold with the חמץ unless it is known with certainty that the alcohol was not produced from the five types of grain.<sup>28</sup>

Perfumes, cologne, toilet water, hair spray, hair tonic, pre and after shave lotion, mouthwash, and spray deodorants are to be considered as חמץ unless the specific brand was approved for use during פסח.<sup>29</sup>

7. Some liquid products are not fit to be consumed (and cannot be made fit by diluting it or making other minor improvements to it). These products may be used on פסח without investigating their contents.

These include nail polish, nail polish remover, ink, and paint.<sup>30</sup>

8. Liquid medicines also present a serious question.<sup>31</sup> [Liquid medicines are commonly given to children]. Liquid medicines may contain actual חמץ and may not be כלב מאכילת כלב. Regarding such medicines, a Rav should be consulted.<sup>32</sup>

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24. זהו לשונו של ר"ש איידר שליט"א בספרו (הל' פסח עמ' 42).

25. דהוי ספיקא דאורייתא. (שם הע' פט).

26. ס' הל' פסח לר"ש איידר (עמ' 52).

27. כ' בס' הל' פסח הע' צב "כ' באג"מ (או"ח ח"ג ס' ס"ב) "ואלקאהאל עצמו כשהוא בעין לא נחשב נפסל מאכילה שיש מנכרים ששותין אותו ע"י תערובות ותיקון קצת" וכהוראה זו שמעתי בשם הגאון ר' איסר זלמן מלצר זצ"ל ומו"ר הגר"א קטלר זצ"ל ויבדל"ח הגר"י קמנצקי שליט"א וכן נוהג הגרמ"פ שליט"א וכ"כ הגרצ"פ פראנק זצ"ל במקראי קודש (ס' נ"ד) ומסיק "ובענינו ראינו כי ההמון הגס שנתה ספירט זה בלי תיקון" ע"ש שהביא דברי האחרונים בזה. ומה שהמשלה פוגמת אותו לשתיה ע"י שמערת בו סם ורעל ע' מקראי קודש שם (ואחרונים שהביא שם) ובשר"ת לבושי מרדכי (ס' פ"ו) ודברי מלכיאל (ח"ד ס' כ"ב אות ו') וע' שעהמ"ב (ס' קי"ב אות ז', ח').

28. ס' הל' פסח (שם).

29. ס' הל' פסח (עמ' 62).

30. ס' הל' פסח (שם). ושאר הדברים שכלל שם לא רשמתי שהלוא דברים פשוטים הם. י.ב.פ.

31. ס' הל' פסח (עמ' 42). ועי' למעלה מה שכתבנו שכל שהוא לרפואה אינו דרך אכילה וה"ה בנידון זה אבל יש לחשוש שדברים אלו אינם נפסלים מאכילה שאפשר לתקנם ע"י טיפול מעט וא"כ לא שנה מה שהוא "אוכל" אותם שלא בדרך אכילה. כך הבנתי הענין. י.ב.פ.

32. ע' בס' הל' פסח (שם).