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The Seder Night: Exalted Evening

Excerpted from **'The Seder Night: An Exalted Evening' A Passover Haggadah with a commentary based on the teachings of Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik; Edited by Rabbi Menachem D. Genack**

Seder HaKearah - The Talmud (Pesachim 114b) discusses the requirement to place shenei tavshilin, two cooked items, on the Seder plate, commemorating the korban Pesach and the chagigah offering that were eaten when sacrifices were brought in the Temple. Rav Huna says that this requirement may be fulfilled by using beets and rice. According to Rav Yosef, one must use two different types of meat. Rambam (Hilkhos Chametz u-Matzah 8:1) follows the opinion of Rav Yosef, while the popular custom is to place one item of meat and an egg on the Seder plate (see Kesef Mishneh, loc cit.).

The presence of the egg at the Seder also has another source. The first day of Passover always occurs on the same day of the week as Tishah be-Av, the day that marks the destruction of the Temple and the exile of the Jews (Orach Chayyim 428:3). Accordingly, the custom is to eat an egg, a symbol of mourning, on the first night of Pesach (see Rama, Orach Chayyim 476:2). The egg, therefore, symbolizes both joy, the chagigah, and mourning, Tish'ah be-Av.

The Beit ha-Levi explains the correlation between the first day of Passover and Tish'ah be-Av as follows. Several midrashic sources indicate that the Exodus from Egypt was premature. The Jews were supposed to have been enslaved in Egypt for 400 years but were redeemed after only 210 years. After 210 years of exile, the Jews were in danger of completely losing their Jewish identity. Had they remained in Egypt any longer, they would have been hopelessly assimilated. The urgent need to redeem them without further delay explains why the Exodus occurred "be-chipazon, in haste" (Deut. 16:3). God, therefore, redeemed them prematurely, and the balance of their term of exile would have to be completed in future exiles. Thus, the redemption from Egypt was not a complete redemption, since it was the cause of the later exiles. It is, therefore, appropriate to eat an egg, an open expression of mourning, on the very night of redemption.

It is interesting to note that the terminology of shenei tavshilin occurs with respect to the laws both of Passover, when one is required to place shenei tavshilin on the plate, and of Tish'ah be-Av, when one may not eat shenei tavshilin in the meal preceding the Tish'ah be-Av fast. The similar terminology further points to the correlation between Passover and Tish'ah be-Av.

(Reshimot)

Seder Leil Pesach - There is a logic and a structure not only to the Maggid section of the Haggadah, but also to the entire Seder. The Gemara emphasizes in several places the necessity of preserving the proper order of performance on Pesach night. For example, the Gemara (Pesachim 114b-115a) asks what blessing should be made if one must eat maror before the Maggid section because there is no other vegetable for karpas. It is evident from the discussion that the fulfillment of the mitzvah of maror would not have occurred the first time it was eaten when it was eaten as karpas, but rather the second. If one could fulfill the mitzvah of maror at the first dipping, the whole discussion of the Gemara would be superfluous. Apparently, one may not eat maror before matzah. According to Rashbam (Pesachim 114a), the sequential order of eating matzah first and then maror is biblically mandated. This is based on the verse "al matzot u-merorim yo'kheluhu, they shall eat it (the korban Pesach) with unleavened bread and bitter herbs" (Num. 9:11), implying that the matzot are eaten first, and then the maror. The requirement to maintain a sequence, however, is also applicable to the entire Seder.

In order to explain this, we must understand that each of the mitzvot of Pesach night has two aspects, two kiyumim, two fulfillments. The mitzvah of sipur Yetzi'at Mitzrayim is discharged in a twofold way - through the medium of speech and through symbolic actions. A person who eats the matzah and the maror before saying Maggid fulfills the mitzvah of eating matzah, but does not fulfill the mitzvah of sipur Yetzi'at Mitzrayim by means of eating matzah. That is what the Gemara (Pesachim 115b) means by referring to matzah, lechem oni (Deut. 16:3), as "lechem she-onin alav devarim harbeh, the bread over which we recite many things." Since eating matzah is also part of sipur, we understand the need for Seder, for a particular order of performance.

(Kol ha-Rav)

The language utilized by Rambam in his introduction to the order of the Pesach Seder is reminiscent of his introduction to the Temple service of Yom Kippur. In Hilchot Chametz u-Matzah (8:1), Rambam begins "Seder, the order, for the performance of the mitzvot on the night of the fifteenth is as follows." In Hilchot Avodat Yom ha-Kippurim (4:1), Rambam begins, "Seder, the order, for the performances of the day is as follows." Just as following the order of the Yom Kippur service is essential for the proper performance of the mitzvah, so, too, following the order of the Seder is essential for the proper fulfillment of the mitzvot of this night of the fifteenth of Nisan. By following an order we demonstrate that all the parts of the Seder are interconnected and only collectively do they properly retell the story of Yetzi'at Mitzrayim. If, for instance, one were to consume the matzah before reciting Maggid, the narrative would be deficient in that one would not have satisfied the facet of lechem oni, bread over which we are to recount the Exodus. Similarly, the karpas is intended to elicit the questions that will enable the Maggid discussion to proceed, and the failure to eat the karpas in its proper sequence would impair or forestall the Maggid section. Only through adherence to the prescribed order can we express the overarching principles and ideas that are intended to emerge from, and which are coordinated with, our actions on the Seder night. (Reshimot)

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Rabbi Frand Hagaddah Insights

We Are What We Do

One of the perennial topics that come up at the Seder is the nature of the dialog between the Wise Son and his father in the Hagaddah narrative. The Wise Son asks his father "What are the testimonies, decrees, and ordinances that Hashem our G-d has commanded you?" The answer given to him is "Therefore explain to him the laws of the Pesach offering: that one may not eat dessert after the final taste of the Pesach offering."

Why is this terse answer an appropriate response to his all-encompassing question? The simple and perhaps the correct answer is that this statement "Ayn maftirin achar haPessach Afikoman" is the last Mishna in Perek Arvei Pessachim, which discusses the laws of Seder night. In fact, we tell him everything – from A to Z – from that Talmudic chapter. The law that one cannot eat anything after the Afikoman is "Z" – the last item in that catalog of laws found in the Talmudic Tractate dealing with Passover.

However, if we wish to engage in homiletics (which is very common on Seder night) one could interpret as follows: The Wise Son is asking a very fundamental question. We all realize how basic and fundamental the Exodus story is to our religion and to our historical experience. Still, the Wise Son is asking – why do we need this abundance of mitzvos that have to do with the Exodus? Would it not suffice with just one or two symbolic commandments to recall the event? Moreover, aside from all the many mitzvos associated with Pessach in general and the Seder night in particular, there are another several dozen mitzvos that the Torah identifies as being "zecher l'Yitzias Mitzraim" [commemorating the Exodus from Egypt]. For example, the mitzvah of Tefillin and the mitzvah of redeeming the First Born are classified as being "zecher l'Yitzias Mitzraim". Why so many mitzvos? Why all these testimonies, decrees, and ordinances?

The truth of the matter is that the question the Wise Son asks is really the question the Sefer HaChinuch addresses to his son. In Mitzvah 16 (regarding the prohibition of breaking a bone from the Paschal offering), the author explains the reason for this mitzvah: On Seder night we need to feel like wealthy people, kings and princes. Kings and princes do not break bones when they eat their meat. Such behavior typifies one who rarely eats meat and wants to suck out the last bit of juice from the broken bone. The Chinuch writes that in order to feel and demonstrate that we are free and wealthy men (the experience of "Cheirus"), the Torah commands us to emulate such practices and not break the bones on Seder night.

Then, in a fundamental teaching, the author writes (to his son), "Do not think the number of commandments relating to the Exodus is excessive and that one or two rituals would suffice for our children and grandchildren to not forget the historical events of the Exodus from Egypt. Such an idea (which is basically the question of the Wise son) is mistaken. My dear son, listen to this and it will give you a basic understanding into the reason for much of Torah and many of the mitzvos: MAN IS INFLUENCED BY HIS ACTIONS (Adam nif'al k'fi peuloso)."

The world says, "You are what you eat". The Chinuch says, "You are what you do" and "The way you act is the way you become."

The Chinuch gives a famous parable about a person who was a righteous individual – kind, compassionate, and kind-hearted. For whatever reason, he ended up in a profession where he needed to be cruel. In contemporary terms, we can picture someone who got in trouble with the mafia. They drafted him into their service and they told him that he was going to be their enforcer. "You are going to start breaking people's knees or we will break your knees!"

This person started out as a wonderful compassionate individual. But, as fate would have it, for years and years and years he needed to make his living by being an enforcer for the mafia, using all kinds of violent techniques to collect funds for his employers. The Chinuch writes that such a person will

inevitably eventually develop a nature that is cruel and hard-hearted. You become what you practice. You are what you do.

On the other hand, he writes, a person who is mean and cruel but is forced into a profession in which he must be kind and giving will eventually become a compassionate person. This, he says, is what mitzvos are all about. It is not merely enough for us to do one or two things. The more you do the more you become. The fundamental idea of doing mitzvos is to change us for the better! The Torah wants there to be a lasting impression on our souls. By the performance of mitzvos we should CHANGE. There should be an impression. This lasting impression on our souls comes about by doing Divinely mandated actions over and over again.

Therefore, if we drink the wine, lean, emulate free wealthy men, do not break the bones and act the part, we will become like wealthy people, kings and princes. This is why we do not eat dessert after the Afikoman. We want the taste (of the Matza/Paschal offering) to remain in our mouths. We want to create a lasting impression to the mitzvos we do. This is what we tell the Wise Son. The desire to have a lasting impression is symbolic of what mitzvos are about in general. The goal of mitzvos is that we should become different, better, people. We achieve that goal by doing. The more we do, the better we become. This is the reason for the testimonies, decrees, and ordinances which Hashem our G-d has commanded.

Not Only One Has Risen Up Against Us

"And it is this that has stood by our fathers and us. For not only one has risen against us to annihilate us, but in every generation they rise against us, to annihilate us. But the Holy One, Blessed is He rescues us from their hand."

This is not a novel statement. It was obvious when the text of the Hagaddah was composed, and it is certainly obvious by now that there have been many many people who have risen up to attempt to destroy us. It is a vast understatement to say that "not only one has risen up" against us! What then is the author of the Hagaddah telling us?

Furthermore, how does the narrative continue? "Go and learn what Lavan the Aramean attempted to do to our father Yaakov! For Pharaoh decreed only against the males, Lavan attempted to uproot everything..." Why is this the proof to the statement "Not only one has risen against us?"

I saw an interesting observation. The expression "For not only one has risen against us to annihilate us" means something different. If we look at the world and at all the ideologies that have come across the world stage, so many ideologies began with one person who developed a following. From one person an idea took hold. For instance, Martin Luther started a movement (Lutheranism). Karl Marx had an idea (Marxism). Millions and even billions of people followed the idea of one man. A person comes up with an idea; people take to the idea; they propagate the idea, and the idea becomes widespread among people – but it originated from one man with one idea.

There is an exception to this rule and that is anti-Semitism. Anti-Semitism is a movement by which various people throughout the ages have had various reasons why they hate Jews. The reasons, however, are rarely the same reason. "For not one person alone rose up against us to destroy us." There is something different about anti-Semitism: It was not merely one person's idea. Person A had one idea why he was anti-Semitic; Person B had another idea why he was anti-Semitic, and so on down the line. One person said it was racist; another person said because they do not like our noses; some people said because they do not like the way we act. They converge at the same point of hatred, but they begin with a variety of often contradictory reasons and ideas for their hatred.

What does that say? Not only one stood up against us. Anti-Semitism in its various forms has been promoted by so many people. However, everybody has a new complaint, finds a new flaw, comes up with a new idea why to hate us. The bottom line, however, is the same – they all hate us.

Come and hear – because Pharaoh followed Lavan. If he was merely following in Lavan's footsteps, he would need to uproot everything – get rid

of all the Jews – exactly as Lavan tried to do. But, no! Pharaoh had a new form of anti-Semitism: Only kill the males. This was something new. This is the way it has been throughout the generations. The "miracle" of anti-Semitism is one of the greatest proofs of the existence of the Almighty. Most "isms" come and go, whether it is humanism, socialism, or communism. But there is one "ism" that has been with us since time immemorial – anti-Semitism.

It started with Lavan, thousands of years ago. It continued with Pharaoh and then with other enemies. It continued with Nevuchadezzar, the Greeks, and the Romans. It continued with the Moslems and the Spanish and the Catholics. It continued with Chelminiski and the Ukrainians and with the Nazis. This has been going on for thousands and thousands of years.

What does that tell you? It tells you that it is not our noses and it is not our faces and it is not this and not that. It is not because we control the world or because we do not control the world or we are too poor or too rich. It is because our enemies understand on some level that we are the nation designated by G-d and put here in this world to spread His Word. That fact is what they cannot take. That is why they hate us.

It comes in different forms. It comes for different reasons. "Not for one reason alone have they risen up against us." The miracle is that in each instance and in each generation "G-d saves us from their hands."

Here we are in 2015 where so many millions of people thought that "if we have a State" that will cure anti-Semitism. They thought, "if we act like everybody else" that will cure anti-Semitism. We want to be normal like everybody else.

Three hundred thousand people are massacred in Darfur without much of an international reaction but the United Nations goes ballistic when an Israeli bulldozer runs over one woman by accident. What is that saying?

Not only one has risen up against us to destroy us. G-d alone, nothing else, saves us from their hands. Not the State, not normalization, not assimilation. Only G-d saves us from their hands, in each and every generation.

Transcribed by David Twersky Seattle, WA; Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman, Baltimore, MD

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Rabbi Reisman - Thoughts on the Haggadah

Kadeish - I would like to share with you a Shaila that came to my Seder table. It is common that in middle of the Shabbos Seuda someone comes with a Shaila, however, it is rare that this happens during the Seder. A couple of years ago someone knocked on my door with an interesting Shaila. He was sitting and drinking the 4 Kosos from his Becher and he noticed that the Becher lost some of its wine onto the plate. He refilled it for Kiddush and for the second Kos, however, by the time he got to the third Kos he realized that the Becher had a hole in it and that the wine was leaking out. Now he wondered if he was Yotzei the 4 Kosos because after all it has to be drunk from a Kos. So he wanted to know if he was Yotzei or not?

What I did was to measure the cup. Under the hole there was enough place for a Reviis of wine and therefore I told him that it was ok. However, it is an interesting Halacha to know as it is brought in the Mishna Berura in the Shar Tzion in 183 where it discusses Kos Shel Beracha, that the Din of a Kos is M'akeiv, it has to be a Kos. Therefore if the hole had been lower in the cup it would have been M'akeiv. An interesting Shaila and something that most people don't think about and therefore something I mention.

On the Arba Kosos section of the Haggadah. Regarding the Arba Kosos as many of you know, it is the opinion of many Poskim, Rav Moshe is one of the most prominent and recent Gedolei Haposkim who held this way that the Ikur Mitzvah is Mikuyam (is accomplished) specifically with the drinking of wine. Wine which is alcoholic. Many people find that difficult because after all if grape juice is good enough for Kiddush and Havdalah what about for the Seder. Well many Poskim hold that for the Seder you need Chairus and a symbol of Chairus is an alcoholic drink. The Eitza I would like to share with

you is that when it comes to the Arba Kosos we are supposed to be drinking Rov of the specific cup in front of us. Many people have large cups in front of them and end up drinking a lot of whatever the Mashka is and therefore, if it is alcohol it is disturbing to them. The Eitza is to take a cup which is the Shiur. Rav Moshe's Shiur was about 3.3 ounces for a Reviis and you can go into a Seforim store and they have 3.5 ounce Bechers. You can put in half wine (of almost any type of wine that we have today) and half grape juice and drink Rov of that. Which means that the cup would have about 1.7 ounces of wine and you drink half of that so for each Kos you are drinking under an ounce of wine. For most people that is manageable. If that is not manageable and someone finds that extremely difficult then perhaps you can be Yotzei with grape juice.

It is accepted that the wine has to have at least 3.5% to 4% alcohol. Where does that come from? Chazal didn't measure percentages of alcohol? The answer is as follows. The Gemara says in Maseches Shabbos 77a (3 lines from the top) (דאמר רבא כל חמרא דלא דרי על חד תלת מיא לאו חמרא הווא) that they used to be Mozeig they used to mix their wine with water, 3 parts water to one part wine. Now we don't know how strong their wine was, we don't know the % of alcohol. However, we do know that as the sugar in the wine turns into alcohol there are enzymes that live in bacteria that cause that change.

Once the wine hits 14% alcohol the bacteria die. So that it is not possible for grape wine to naturally turn into a drink that is more than 14% alcohol. So the maximum it could have been is 14%. 14% and Rava mixed three parts water to one part wine so that means that he drank wine that was maximum 3.5% alcohol. This is the way that we get our idea that the Yayin Kal (the lightest that would qualify as wine) is roughly 3.5% and we say 4% just to play it safe. Therefore, if you are using an 8% wine you can mix it 50/50 with grape juice. Naturally, a lighter wine with less alcohol would have to be mixed proportionately. And so, my tip is do the Mitzvah the right way, do it with wine but with wine that Halacha recognizes as wine as I have just described.

Karpas - How can you Patur the Bracha of Borei Pri Hoadama of Maror with the Bracha of Borei Pri Hoadama of Karpas if there is at least an hour in between the two eating's? A Hefsek wouldn't make a difference. If that is true, then why do we make another Brachah of Borei Pri Hagafen on the second Kois of wine, the Haggadah is the only Hefsek and that wouldn't create a Chiyuv of an additional Beracha? In reality the GRA holds that the Bracha of Borei Pri Hoadama of Karpas doesn't Patur the Maror of a Beracha, however, it is after Moitzi Matzah and therefore is part of the meal. The Mageiv Avraham holds that really you wouldn't need another Brachah of Borei Pri Hagafen on the second Kois, however, you have in mind strictly not to be Yotzei from the Bracha that was made on the first Kois.

On the theme of Maggid. There is a well known Arizal that before Klal Yisrael left Mitzrayim they were in the 49th Shaar Tumah and had they waited one more minute they would have fell into the 50th Shaar Tumah. It is a well known idea and I am often asked the following very good Kasha on this Chazal. On that night of Makas Bichoros, it is not logical to think that any Jews were tempted to bow down to an Avodah Zorah that night. It was a holy night, they had brought the Korban Pesach and sprayed the blood on the doorposts and Egyptians were dying as we know there wasn't a house without a Meis. There was a Tzeaka Gedola in Mitzrayim and they were sitting comfortably in their homes. How can the Arizal say that if they had stayed in Mitzrayim in such surroundings for an extra minute they would have fallen into deeper Shaarei Tumah? It is very hard to understand.

In addition, Chazal Darshun Mishchu Yidaichem Mai'avoda Zorah U'kchu Lachem. That the whole Korban Pesach was leaving Avoda Zorah, separating Klal Yisrael from Avoda Zorah. What do you mean that they were falling into the 49th Shaar of Tumah? It is a very problematic Arizal and difficult to understand.

I would suggest the following Teretz. When they were leaving Mitzrayim of course they were at that moment involved in adapting to a new life of

Kedusha. They had a choice, they could have run out of Mitzrayim as if it was the worst thing that ever happened to their spiritual existence falling into the lowest Sharei Tumah. Or they could have been like many people. They could have been calm people. It is time to leave so they get ready to leave, gather their things together and do it in a way that it doesn't show urgency. Had they failed to show urgency in their leaving of Mitzrayim, that itself would have been such an Avla, such a problem that it would have meant that they lack an appreciation of what they were doing, of what they were going through. Such a lack of appreciation would have thrown them back to the 49th Sharei Tumah. They could have never gotten up again.

Klal Yisrael in leaving Mitzrayim had to have that appreciation that they are running like someone who is running from a plague, like someone who runs from something terrible. Eager to go towards Har Sinai. That is why they had to rush.

In the Shulchan Aruch it says that every morning when you come to Shul you should sprint up the steps into Shul. You should go in quickly. This applies even to Shabbos which is a time that we don't run, to Shul you can run. A person is supposed to show eagerness in Avodas Hashem. A desire to go quickly.

Come to Yeshiva. Look at the boys going into Yeshiva. Night Seder, look at the people walking in. You have people who walk in eagerly and quickly to their Gemaras. Then you have the people who saunter in and stop for a coffee first. It is not just the few minutes, it is the attitude. The attitude of going Bichipazon, with a rush and that is what really keeps a person at the Madrega he seeks to achieve.

On the theme of Maggid. Of course, the main purpose of the evening is L'hagid (והגדת לבנה). There is an old Chakira that I had for many many years. What is the Mitzvah of Maggid. Is the Mitzvah of Maggid to tell someone something that he never heard before or it the Mitzvah of Maggid to tell somebody something that he already knows? In other words what is the Mitzvah of Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim, do you have to say Chiddushim to the person who is listening or is it enough to recite what was? We have a bit of a Kasha and that is that we know that the Haggadah has to be said B'derech Shaila U'teshuva (question and answer) and that sounds like you are going to hear a Chiddush. However, there is a difficulty. That is because the question and answer is prewritten. If it is prewritten how is that a question and answer? So this needs a Hesber.

The Malbim explains the difference between the word L'haggid and L'sapeir. Both of which mean to tell. The Malbim's Yesod is that in the Hebrew language there are separate words for telling someone something which he knows already and telling someone something new. Now when it comes to the Haggadah it says both Shemos 13:8 (והגדת לבנה ביום ההוא לאמר) which is a Lashon of L'haggid and it also says in Shemos 10:2 (ולמען תספר) which is a Lashon of Sippur. Therefore, it would seem to turn out that you would need both, to tell the old and to tell the new. Well which one is the Mitzvah, how do you do both? (Please look in the Avadim Hayinu section at what Rav Hutner says regarding the difference between a Talmid and an outsider).

The Malbim who is the authority of this type of definition of words, writes in Tehillim 19:2 something that we say every Shabbos (מספרים בבוד-) the following. He says in Lashon Kadosh we find the Lashon of (להגיד) as in Tehillim 92:3 (להגיד). (להגיד בבקר תסדר). is to tell something new. L'sapeir is to relate something old. So that in Hebrew there are words similar to synonyms but not quite synonyms which refer to two ideas. (להגיד) is something new and L'sapeir as in Tehillim 19:2 (להגיד) refers to things that are already known.

How does that explain the night of the Seder? In a confusing way. On the night of the Seder we are commanded as it says in Shemos 13:8 (והגדת לבנה, ביום ההוא). L'hagid, so you are supposed to say something new. But the Torah also says in Shemos 10:2 (ולמען תספר בנה וכן-בנה). L'sapeir to say the old. Which one is it, is it to say the old or is it to say the new?

The Avoda on the night of the Seder is to say the old and to have a new

appreciation. To say that which we already know which is Yetzias Mitzrayim but to understand it with a greater Chashivus and a greater depth.

In the Mah Nishtanah section of Maggid, it is brought B'sheim the GRA that Halaila Hazeh seems improper, as we know that any word that ends in a Komeitz Hei is Lashoin Nekaiva. So it should be Halaila Hazois to make it that both words are Lashoin Nekaiva?

The GRA explains that by the night of Pesach it was Yoim and it only appeared to be night. Night symbolizes Tzarois and difficulty. The night of Pesach is like day because it is a wonderful and bright period. So we say Halaila Hazeh in the Lashon Zachor which is a Lashoin of Yom.

The Torah Temimah brings this Vort and he is tremendously upset over it, he says it is not Emes and the Kasha does not begin. The word Laila is an exception to the rule, it is always Lashoin Zachor. We just had in the Megillah, Balaila Hahu Nadida Shnas Hamelech. We have Laila Hahu Yotzah Mimitzrayim. Hahu is Lashon Zachor not Lashon Nekaivah. Obviously, Laila is Lashon Zachor. Ai, it says Mikol "Haleilois" in the Mah Nishtaneh which is a Lashoin Nekaivah? We find the word B'chor which is Lashon Zachor, and we call it Makos "B'choirois". So there are exceptions to the rule. The Torah Temimah still maintains that the Kasha does not begin and that Laila is Lashon Zachor and there is no Shaila on the Mah Nishtaneh.

The same exact Vort is brought B'sheim the Shla Hakadoish. He says that 2 mistakes should come up is a very strange thing. 1) Laila Hazeh instead of Laila Hazois and 2) Laila K'Yoim Yair. Rebbi suggested an answer, that Laila symbolizes Tzarois. Really it should be Lashoin Nekaivah, however, when darkness is secretly very good then it is Lashoin Zachor. Then it is Laila K'yoim Yair.

The truth is, every Laila is that way. Laila in Tanach typically doesn't mean nighttime it means a period of difficulty, a time of Tzarah. In Tehillim it is certainly that way. All Lailois appear B'Lashoin Zachor. Balaila Hahu Nadida Shnas Hamelech, it looks like a difficult time for Klal Yisroel, however, the Yeshua was beginning. Any difficult time a person goes through, the secret is Laila Kayoim Yair. It is not a difficult time it is a wonderful time, it's just that we don't see it. Therefore, the GRA and Shla who's Vort is primarily aimed at the Megillah is applicable everywhere.

In the Mah Nishtaneh section of Maggid we say (שקבל הלילות אין אנו) - (הלקחה הנזה שתי פעמים - משבילין אפילו פעם אחת asked here, as most of us dip 3 times. 1) Karpas in salt water, 2) Maror in Charoises, and 3) Koirech in Charoises.

In the Avadim Hayinu section of Maggid we discuss the idea of (קל) (המרכבה לספר ביציאת מצרים הרי זה משבה). It is really a question why we say the same thing again and again every year, and the fact that we say it every year B'lashon Kasha and Teretz. A person has to ask and that is part of the Guf Hamitzvah to ask and for someone to answer. Not only that, even if a person is all alone he asks questions to himself and answers them. Isn't that strange that you have to ask yourself questions and give yourself answers to them, especially pre-scripted questions such as the Mah Nishtaneh?

I think that I had a certain feeling of Havana in the Haggada last year, a certain sensitivity which afterwards I saw in the Satmar Rebbe's Haggadah the Mari Tav. There is a concept that I once heard from Rav Hutner who said that the difference between a Talmid and someone who is not a Talmid is someone who learns from someone who is a student and an outsider who is just listening is that when a Talmid hears something from his Rebbi the second time or the third time, he already knows it but when he hears the Rebbi repeat it he has a greater interest and a deeper understanding, he is a Talmid.

An outsider though who hears something which he already heard, doesn't feel interested at all. It is something he knows. Getting information, he knows that information. It has no interest to him.

The difference between the Talmid is someone who learns and someone who doesn't, is someone who connects to something which he already knows and has a personal connection to it in a way that gives him an understanding

of Amkus, a depth in the thing that he is looking at, the thing that he understands.

I remember that I had the special Zechus of being in Rav Moshe's home on Shabbos on a number of occasions. I remember him learning Chumash. He had a regular set of Mikraos Gedolos Chumash which he was learning from. It struck me as so strange. Here is Rav Moshe who knew the whole Shas by heart and he is looking again at the Chumash, he is looking at the Rashi once more? It struck me as strange, why is Rav Moshe going through the motions of learning things that he already knows perfectly well?

However, when I heard Rav Hutner's idea, I understood. A person who has a real connection, hearing it again and again no matter how many times he hears it, it has a new Cheishek to him. It depends how you sit down to the Haggada. You have to sit down to the Haggada with a connection, with an interest, always looking for something new.

I heard in the name of the Pnei Menachem, the Gerrer Rebbe, he asked that we know that we don't eat Matzah before the night of Pesach so that we should eat it B'taivon, with desire. So we stay away from it on Erev Pesach and many of us stay from eating Matzah from Rosh Chodesh Nissan, and yet other people don't eat Matzah from 30 days prior to Pesach. This is all done so that we should eat the Matzah on the Seder night with a Cheishek.

The Pnei Menachem asks why then on Shabbos Hagadol do we read the Haggada? Shouldn't we stay away from the Haggada on Shabbos Hagadol in order that when we come to the Seder we should do the Mitzvah of Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim with a Cheishek?

The Pnei Menachem answers that when you eat, the more you eat the more you get full and therefore the less you have desire to eat more. Divrei Torah is not that way because the more you look at it and the more you see in it, the more depth you have and the more appreciation you have. Each time there is more Cheishek. You are a real Talmid.

We say (וְכָל הַמִּרְבֵּה לְסִפּוּר בִּיצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם הָרִי זֶה מְשֻׁבָּח) In the Haggada we say that the more one adds to Sipur Yetzias Mitzrayim he is praised. I have a Kasha. The Shulchan Aruch says that a person is obligated to be Misapeir Yetzias Mitzrayim until he falls asleep. So you have 2 people each who are keeping the Shulchan Aruch. One falls asleep and one stays up an hour later. So we say (וְכָל הַמִּרְבֵּה לְסִפּוּר בִּיצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם הָרִי זֶה מְשֻׁבָּח), he is praiseworthy because he said more Sipur Yetzias Mitzrayim. Why? Each one kept his obligation. It is just that one was more tired and one was less tired. However, each one kept his obligation to say Sipur Yetzias Mitzrayim until he falls asleep?

According to what we are saying now it is not Shver. Somebody who is not a Talmid gets tired, walks into Shiur, with the attitude of it is a Raya it is not a Raya, who cares. Ta Shma or not Ta Shma, no difference. He falls asleep quickly.

Someone who is a Talmid has an interest, a Cheishek, a Bren, a desire and he stays awake. Kol Hamarbe L'sapeir the person who is a Talmid stays connected, and therefore, Harei Zeh Mishubach. He is Takeh praiseworthy.

Here you have 3 Nikudos with the same idea. The question and understanding of why we repeat the same thing year after year. We try to be like a Talmid who is connected. The Pnei Menachem's Kasha of why we say the Haggada on Shabbos Hagadol with the same Teretz. The Kasha of (וְכָל הַמִּרְבֵּה לְסִפּוּר בִּיצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם הָרִי זֶה מְשֻׁבָּח) which also comes with the same idea that a person has to see himself connected to that which he is saying and then it carries meaning.

This thought is also regarding (וְכָל הַמִּרְבֵּה לְסִפּוּר בִּיצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם הָרִי זֶה מְשֻׁבָּח) Kol Hamarbe L'sapeir Bitzias Mitzrayim Harei Zeh Mishubach. We are told as it says in Parshas Bo 12:11 (וְאָכַלְתֶּם אֹתוֹ בְּהֶפְזוֹן), that the eating of the Matzah was done in a rush in Mitzrayim. Actually, it is a little hard to understand. We usually picture Yetzias Mitzrayim as a rush out of Mitzrayim, they weren't ready. However, the Posuk says (וְאָכַלְתֶּם אֹתוֹ בְּהֶפְזוֹן) that they were commanded beforehand to eat the Matzah in a rush. How do you command someone to eat the Matzah in a rush? This is a very difficult thing to understand.

There is an interesting Chasam Sofer on (וְאָכַלְתֶּם). He says that the commandment was to be Misapeir Bitzias Mitzrayim in Mitzrayim on that night, the night of Pesach. It was 13:8 (בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא לְאֹמֶר), they were speaking about what was taking place. The Chasam Sofer says that the Mitzvah was to be Misapeir Bitzias Mitzrayim as much as you could to the degree that in the end when it comes time to eat the Matzah it will be the last minute and you will have to rush to eat the Matzah and get the eating of the Matzah in on time.

The Chasam Sofer writes that we see that it stayed that way for generations, we are Misapeir Yetzias Mitzrayim and then we look at the clock and it is late and we have to hurry with the eating of our Matzah. Therefore, (וְאָכַלְתֶּם אֹתוֹ בְּהֶפְזוֹן) was a commandment to put their priorities in the right place. To put their priorities in the Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim even though it means you will have to do Matzah, Marror, Korech, Shulchan Aruch, and Tzafon in a rush, but that is the way it was in Mitzrayim and that is the way it is Rayui to be L'doros.

Just bear in mind that throughout the generations that lived in the times when the Bais Hamikdash stood, they did everything that we do during the Seder plus they ate the Korban Chagigah and the Korban Pesach. Imagine how rushed that Seuda was. If we find that is it tight imagine how tight it was then. They really had to choose between enjoying all the eating and enjoying the Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim. That (וְאָכַלְתֶּם אֹתוֹ בְּהֶפְזוֹן) you might think that the eating is also a Mitzvah so we should do that one slowly. (וְאָכַלְתֶּם אֹתוֹ בְּהֶפְזוֹן) is a command, choose what you do slowly, the Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim or Mashe'aikain all of the eating.

In the Ma'aseh Rabbi Eliezer section of Maggid we say - the Talmidim came in to inform the Rabbanim that (הִיגִיעַ זְמַן קְרִיאַת שְׁמַע שֶׁל שְׁחַרְיָה). Was it the beginning of the Zman or the end of the Zman? Why would the Talmidim bother them at the beginning of the Zman?

Rav Chaim Volozhiner was against singing Tzur Misheloi on Friday night because perhaps you are Yoitzeh Benthching with that song and Chazal established benthching in a special format for us to be Yoitzeh. The same with Zichiras Yitzias Mitzrayim, that Chazal said that the Kriyas Shema encompasses both Oil Malchus Shamayim and Zichiras Yitzias Mitzrayim. So it is very good to say that the Talmidim came in at the beginning of the Zman so that the Rabbanim wouldn't continue being Sipar Yitzias Mitzrayim and fulfill the Diyaraisa obligation of Zaicheir Yitzias Mitzrayim not the way Chazal set up the Mitzvah. The correct way is by Kriyas Shema when you say Ani Hashem Elokaichem Asher Hoitzaisi Eschem Maieretz Mitzrayim.

In the Amar Rabbi Elazar Ben Azarya section of Maggid we say (כָּל יָמֵי - (תִּיָּדָה - לְהִבְיָא לִימוֹת הַמְּשִׁיחָה). The GRA at his Seder would say at this point, Ein Tikvah L'nachash. To explain this to his talmidim the GRA would say that it says in Parshas Beraishis regarding the K'lalah of the Nachash that Afar Toicel Kol Yemei Chayecha. Since it says Kol Yemei Chayecha, if you hold that it means L'hovi Limois Hamashiach then the Nachash has no hope of ever getting its legs back. However, it says Kol Yimei Chayecha by Adam as well regarding the earth that will have to be toiled to obtain food. Rabbi Chaim Kanievsky asks this Kasha in his Haggadah.

In the Arba'a Banim section of Maggid we say about the Rasha - (וְאָף אֹתָהּ) (הַקָּהָה אֶת שִׁנָּיו). Most people understand (הַקָּהָה) as knock out his teeth. This is not what it means as it is written with a Kuf and not a Kaf. It means to blunt his teeth, blunt his sharpness, and blunt his anger. What is the idea of blunting his anger?

Rav Aharon Kotler used to say over the following incident. He often went with the Kapishnitzer Rebbe collecting for Chinuch Atzmai. Once the two of them came to a wealthy man's office and the secretary said that he was not in. They understood that the man was really there so they said that they would wait for him to arrive. It became a waiting game and the man tired and came out angrily. He derided Rav Kotler and the Kapishnitzer Rebbe. He said people always come to me for money without appointments and they come to me at home and in the office. He berated them very harshly. Rav Kotler

winked to the Kapishnitzer Rebbe that he thinks it is time to leave. The Kapishnitzer Rebbe motioned that they should stay. The man carried on and eventually became quiet. The Kapishnitzer Rebbe turned to the wealthy man and said, you have given us what we deserve now please give Chunch Atzmai what it deserves. The man mellowed and made a donation.

The idea is by the Rasha - (וְאָרַךְ אֶתֶּהּ הַקְּהָלָה אֶת שְׂנְיָיו), blunt his teeth. Blunt his anger, let his anger wear out. You will find that underneath he is not such a big Rasha. Don't Pasul the whole person because there is a good person underneath.

This gives new meaning to the often mentioned Gematriya that the Gematriya of Rasha (200+300+70 = 570) less the Gematriya of Shinav (300+50+10+6 = 366) = the Gematriya of Tzaddik (90+4+10+100=204). It is more than just a trick. It is Pshat that if you take the Rasha and you blunt his anger you will end up with Tzaddik.

Still in the Rasha section of Maggid it says - (בְּעִבּוּר זֶה עֲשֵׂה ד' לִי בְּצִאֲתִי), a person must see himself as if he was redeemed from Mitzrayim. Rav Schwab in Shemos 13:8 where this Posuk appears explains the idea of (תִּיב אָדָם לְרֵאוֹת אֶת עַצְמוֹ כְּאִלּוּ הוּא יָצָא מִמִּצְרַיִם) in a new way. We usually say that you should pretend that you left Mitzrayim even though you did not leave Mitzrayim.

Rav Schwab says the obligation is to feel like you are part of K'neses Yisrael, part of the group Klal Yisrael. Klal Yisrael went out so we went out. I didn't have this experience and I don't know what it looked like, however, I am part of Klal Yisrael. If I see myself as part of the Klal then I am going to be Zoche.

We see by Eisav that his family had Nafshois a plural word when there were 6 members of his family and by Yaakov it says Kol Nefesh (one soul) in the singular form even though there were 70 members of Yaakov's family.

With this Mussar we understand when we complain about the Rasha, (וְלִפְיָי), the whole Avoda of Pesach night is that whatever level you are on; see yourself as part of the Klal of Klal Yisrael. Since the Rasha took himself out of the Klal we say (הַקְּהָלָה אֶת שְׂנְיָיו).

In the Arba'a Banim section of Maggid we say about the (וְשִׂאֵינוּ יוֹדְעֵי לִשְׂאוֹל) - (Shemos 13:8) (לְאִמֹר), the word (לְאִמֹר) is extra. (וְהִגַּדְתָּ לְבִנְךָ, בְּיוֹם הַהוּא לְאִמֹר) means to say over to your child, to repeat something. (וְהִגַּדְתָּ) already means tell him so what does (לְאִמֹר) come to teach us?

The Bais Aaron a previous Stoliner Rebbe did a Shidduch with another Chassidic Rebbe (maybe the Rishina Rebbe). When they came together for the Simcha they Davened together. As you may know, the Stoliner Chassidim Daven in a loud voice and it is a very unique Davening. The other Rebbe's Chassidim saw the way the Stoliner Chassidim were Davening and asked if they should copy them. The Rishina Rebbe responded if you are that level then you can copy them and if not then do not copy them. The Stoliner Rebbe responded it is just the opposite. If you are on that level you don't need to Daven in that method, however, if you are not on that level and your Davening is not that significant, then Daven in a loud voice and do things in order that you should be on that level.

Rav Avigdor Miller when he went to Slabodka was much younger than his peers. He was part of a Mussar Vaad that met once a month to work on one Middah. One month someone suggested that they work with the Middah of Emes. Rav Miller said that an old Baal Mussar got up and said Emes we work on all the time, this month let us work on Sheker. Let us work on lies to further our Avodas Hashem. How does lying work? We will say we are Oivdai Hashem, we will say that we are eating L'sheim Shamayim, we will say that we are Davening L'sheim Shamayim, we will say we are going to learn late. We will keep on saying things that may or may not actually be so. By repeating it all the time, we ourselves will hear it and it will be ingrained in us and ultimately we will reach that level. Rabbi Miller used this as a tool in Avodas Hashem and he encouraged people to use this Middah.

Whichever story you like better, this is an explanation in (וְהִגַּדְתָּ לְבִנְךָ בְּיוֹם) (לְאִמֹר), say to the son, you just say it. You might not be holding on the Madrega, you might not be holding on the level, ok. It doesn't matter.

(לְאִמֹר), just be a person who constantly says it. If you constantly say you are going to do it then eventually you are going to get to the Madrega.

In the Tzei Ulmad section of Maggid where we bring and expound on the Posuk Arami Oived Avi - we Darshun on the word V'rav that (וְאֵת עָרָם וְעָרְיָה) V'at Airoim V'erya. When the Yidden left Mitzrayim they were bare of the proper Mitzvos and Zechusim needed to leave Mitzrayim. Hakadoish Baruch Hu gave Klal Yisrael two Mitzvois involving blood and in that Zechus they were able to leave Mitzrayim. The two Mitzvois were Dam Milah and Dam Korban Pesach. Hashem said because of the blood you will live.

The Sanzer Rav had a son who was an extraordinary Kana'i. Kanaim are wont to use an expression about people they see as evil (Resha'im), that it is a Mitzvah to bury them. At the Seder, the Sanzer Rav said, we are told that Klal Yisrael on the night of Makas Bechoirois had no Zechusim with which to leave Mitzrayim which is the reason they were commanded with Dam Milah and Dam Pesach.

The Sanzer Rav asked, the Makkah of Choishech preceded Makkas Bechoirois, and during Makkas Choishech the Reshaim of Klal Yisrael died (80% of the Yidden died). So what does it mean that they didn't have a Mitzvah or Zechus with which to leave Mitzrayim with, didn't those Reshaim need a proper burial, so they certainly had a Mitzvah with which to be busy as there were a 4 to 1 ratio of people that died?

From here we see said the Sanzer Rav that it is not such a great Mitzvah to bury a Rasha. This idea that it is a Mitzvah to bury evildoers is not a great Mitzvah. The Sanzer Rebbe's son responded that this is only a proof that it is not a Mitzvah to bury dead Reshaim, however, Reshaim who are alive, it may be a Mitzvah to bury them.

On the same section of Maggid as the previous Vort - Rav Shteinman asks, the Yidden had to go out of Mitzrayim as Hashem had promised the Avos that he would take them out of Mitzrayim. Therefore, it had to happen Biz'chus the Avos. It says in the Posuk (Shemos 2:25) (וַיִּזְדַּע, אֶל קַיִם) that Hashem remembered his promise to the Avos. So what was (וְאֵת עָרָם וְעָרְיָה) that they were missing Zechusim and Mitzvois with which to go out?

Rav Shteinman answers that even if a person has Zechusim from previous generations, if he doesn't relate to them than he doesn't have the Zechus. He has to connect to his ancestor's Zechusim in order from them to work for him.

As an example he brings Loit when he left Sedoim, he only left because of the Zechus that he took in Oirchim. He took in the Malachim who he thought were people as guests. The Gemara in Maseches Soitah asks why was Loit saved and it gives several reasons. Either Bizchus Avraham or in the Zechus that he guarded the secret that Sarah was Avraham's wife when Avraham said that Sarah was his sister in order to save himself from being executed. So Loit already had Zechusim, why did he need the Zechus that he took in guests?

Rav Shteinman answers if you hold Loit went out in the Zechus of Avraham, that is fine except Loit has to connect to it. By connecting to Avraham Avinu, Loit can go out. When Loit took Oirchim into his home, he certainly did so because he was trained by Avraham Avinu and he was connecting to Avraham Avinu and therefore, the Zechus of Avraham Avinu was helpful to Loit.

The same thing here. When Klal Yisrael had to be saved the night of Makkas Bechoirois, they still had to be connected to their Avos in order to benefit from the Zechusim of their Avos. This is the reason why they were given the Mitzvah of Milah and Pesach which we find both of them by Avraham Avinu that he performed them. Milah is B'feirush in the Posuk and Korban Pesach as Rashi alludes to in Parshas Vayeira. So Klal Yisrael was connecting back to Avraham Avinu and by connecting back they had the Zechus with which to go out.

Of course this is a tremendous Mechayeiv, as many of us in addition to Zechus Avos remember times in our own life the Yeshiva days when we had tremendous Zechusim from the Hasmada and the time spent in learning. All these things are wonderful if you still connect to them. That is the message

Hashem. Nowadays we lock the doors and we just skip saying Kriyas Shema Al Hamita. A little Simchas Yom Tov on the side. But that idea is an idea of a Hergish of Ani Hashem. So the Leil Pesach has this message, the idea of trying to be Margish Kavayochel the Ribbono Shel Olam.

The Blogs :: **Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz**

There is more to freedom than being unchained

March 23, 2015

Passover is surely the best remembered and longest kept holiday in Jewish life. Even after everything else is abandoned, those who are not religiously observant – and who have forgotten most of the holidays – still remember Passover and keep it in some form. In part, this may be because it is the first Jewish holiday; it was formed and celebrated long before all the others. Passover was first celebrated as the People of Israel were being freed from slavery, so that it was not just a memory but a living, active celebration. More than three thousand years have passed since the first Passover night. Yet, Passover still lives on and evokes both nostalgic memories and some serious thinking. The heart of the holiday is, of course, the notion of freedom. We celebrate the end of Egyptian slavery and the start of a free Jewish nation. This is not only a Jewish national story; it is a story with universal appeal. Exile and redemption, suffering and deliverance, are essential components of the human condition. The story of Passover resonates the world over, whether for African Americans or for the Chinese in Taiwan.

Thus, Passover and its ceremonies carry a message that goes far beyond ritual. For some, this message is a question, for others a certainty beyond doubt: what is the meaning of freedom?

A slave who is released from slavery, a prisoner who escapes from prison: these are the most basic expressions of freedom; it is when one is no longer forced to act against one's will. This surely is a part of freedom, but not all of it. There is more to freedom than merely not being shackled. A chair that is chained to a table does not become free when its chains are cut. History has proven again and again that the absence of a master does not make a slave free and the lack of an oppressor does not make the sufferer free. There are many who are no longer chained, but still cannot be called "free." Freedom must be coupled with desire, in order to have meaning. One must want to go somewhere or have a dream to fulfill. When there are no dreams, no wishes, no destination, the "free" person has no advantage over the slave or the oppressed. In other words: the most important part of freedom is inner freedom. A person or a nation that has no real notion of freedom, no real aspirations, will soon become slave to other masters. Indeed, the outcomes of many revolutions and wars of independence prove this. And on a far more mundane level, people with free time – and nothing that they want to do – soon sink into boredom, family fights, or worse.

Freedom, then, is not just a negative concept, the absence of servitude. Freedom also requires a positive value to replace slavery, a meaning beyond that of breaking the chains. Indeed, Passover is not just empty free time, without duties or commandments. Quite the contrary: its celebration involves many commandments, enactments and customs. That is because we need rules and regulations in order to celebrate freedom. Doing nothing – and equally, doing anything – is the definition not of freedom, but of despair. True freedom requires a worldview, hope, and a direction toward which the freed person goes.

The Book of Exodus describes the very first celebration of Passover as a series of Divine commandments: the Israelites are ordered to stay inside their homes and to prepare for moving on. The concept of freedom, then, is immediately intertwined with that of purpose. Something new and positive will come after the oppression of Egypt. It will fill the lives of the nascent Jewish nation and point to a new image of the future.

The centrality of purpose is true both for big movements to free oppressed people and for the individual. If the ex-prisoners use their broken chains

only to beat one another, then freedom was not such a great gain. Throughout the world – from Africa to the heart of Europe – we keep seeing attempts at freedom that end up being failures and disasters. On the national and international level, we are surrounded by new regimes that are nothing but new ways of oppression.

The focus on purpose and meaning is just as important for the family and the individual: to see true freedom as the acceptance of those values which one really wants.

from: Shabbat Shalom <shabbatshalom@ounetwork.org> date: Thu, Apr 2, 2015 at 3:44 PM Subject: OU Shabbat Shalom Weekly

**The Missing Fifth – An extract from Rabbi Sacks' Haggada
Britain's Former Chief Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks**

March 31, 2015 Many commentators, among them the Vilna Gaon, have drawn attention to the influence of the number four in connection with the Haggadah. There are four fours:

The four questions The four sons The four cups of wine The four expressions of redemption: 'I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians and free you from their slavery. I will deliver you with a demonstration of My power and with great acts of judgment. I will take you to Me as a nation.' (Ex.6: 6-7). It may be, though, that just as an X-ray can reveal an earlier painting beneath the surface of a later one, so beneath the surface of the Haggadah there is another pattern to be discerned. That is what I want to suggest in this chapter.

The first thing to note is that there is, in fact, another 'four' on the seder night, namely the four biblical verses whose exposition forms an important part of the Haggadah:

'An Aramean tried to destroy my father . . . 'And the Egyptians ill-treated us and afflicted us . . . 'And we cried to the Lord, the God of our fathers . . . 'And the Lord brought us out of Egypt . . . ' (Deut. 26:5-8) There are, then, not four fours, but five.

In early editions of the Talmud tractate Pesachim (118a) there is a passage that perplexed the medieval commentators. It reads: 'Rabbi Tarfon says: over the fifth cup we recite the great Hallel.' The medieval commentators were puzzled by this because elsewhere the rabbinic literature speaks about four cups, not five. The Mishnah, for example, states that a poor person must be supplied with enough money to be able to buy four cups of wine. In both the Babylonian and Jerusalem Talmuds the discussion revolves around the assumption that there are four cups on seder night. How then are we to understand the statement of Rabbi Tarfon that there is a fifth cup?

Among the commentators three views emerged. The first was that of Rashi and the Tosafists. According to them, there are only four cups on the seder night, and it is forbidden to drink a fifth. The statement of Rabbi Tarfon must therefore be a misprint, and the texts of the Talmud should be amended accordingly.

The second was that of Maimonides. He holds that there is a fifth cup, but unlike the other four, it is optional rather than obligatory. The Mishnah which teaches that a poor person must be given enough money to buy four cupfuls of wine means that we must ensure that he has the opportunity to fulfil his obligation. It does not extend to the fifth cup which is permitted but not compulsory. Rabbi Tarfon's statement is to be understood to mean that those who wish to drink a fifth cup should do so during the recitation of the great Hallel.

The third view, that of Ravad of Posquières, a contemporary of Maimonides, is that one should drink a fifth cup. There is a difference in Jewish law between an obligation, *hovah*, and a religiously significant good deed, *mitzvah*. The first four cups are obligatory. The fifth is a *mitzvah*, meaning, not obligatory but still praiseworthy and not merely, as Maimonides taught, optional.

Thus there was a controversy over the fifth cup. Rashi said that we should not drink it; Maimonides that we may; Ravad that we should. What does one

do, faced with this kind of disagreement? Jewish law tries wherever possible to propose a solution that pays respect to all views, especially when they are held by great halakhic authorities. The solution in the present case was simple. A fifth cup is poured (out of respect for Ravad and Maimonides) but not drunk (out of respect for Rashi).

When a disagreement occurs in the Talmud which is not resolved, the sages often used the word Teyku, 'Let it stand'. We believe that such disagreements will be resolved in the time to come when Elijah arrives to announce the coming of the Messiah. One of his roles will be to rule on unresolved halakhic controversies. An allusion to this is to be found in the word Teyku itself, which was read as an abbreviation of Tishbi Yetaretz Kushyot Ve'ibbayot, 'The Tishbite, Elijah, will answer questions and difficulties.' This therefore is the history behind 'the cup of Elijah' – the cup we fill after the meal but do not drink. It represents the 'fifth cup' mentioned in the Talmud.

According to the Jerusalem Talmud, the reason we have four cups of wine is because of the four expressions of redemption in God's promise to Moses. How then could Rabbi Tarfon suggest that there are not four cups but five? The fascinating fact is that if we look at the biblical passage there are not four expressions of redemption but five. The passage continues: 'And I will bring you to the land I swore with uplifted hand to give to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob. I will give it to you as a possession. I am the Lord.' (Exodus 6: 8)

There is a further missing fifth. As mentioned above, during the course of reciting the Haggadah we expound four biblical verses, beginning with, 'An Aramean tried to destroy my father.' In biblical times, this was the declaration made by someone bringing first-fruits to Jerusalem. However, if we turn to the source we discover that there is a fifth verse to this passage: 'He brought us to this place [the land of Israel] and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey' (Deuteronomy. 26: 9). We do not recite or expound this verse at the seder table. But this strange since the Mishnah states explicitly, 'And one must expound the passage beginning, "An Aramean tried to destroy my father" until one has completed the whole passage.' In fact we do not complete the whole passage, despite the Mishnah's instruction.

So there are three 'missing fifths' – the fifth cup, the fifth expression of redemption, and the fifth verse. It is also clear why. All three refer to God not merely bringing the Jewish people out of Egypt but also bringing them into the land of Israel. The Haggadah as we now have it and as it evolved in rabbinic times is, in Maimonides words, 'the Haggadah as practised in the time of exile,' meaning, during the period of the Dispersion. The missing fifth represented the missing element in redemption. How could Jews celebrate arriving in the land of Israel when they were in exile? How could they drink the last cup of redemption when they had said at the beginning of the seder, 'This year slaves, next year free; this year here, next year in the land of Israel'?

The fifth cup – poured but not drunk – was like the cup broken at Jewish weddings. It was a symbol of incompleteness. It meant that as long as Jews were dispersed throughout the world, facing persecution and danger, they could not yet celebrate to the full. One great sage of the twentieth century, the late Rabbi Menahem Kasher, argued that now that there is a State of Israel, many exiles have been ingathered and Jews have recovered their sovereignty and land, the fifth cup should be re-instated. That remains for the halakhic authorities to decide.

What, though, of the four questions and the four sons? There was a fifth question. The Mishnah states that a child should ask: 'On all other nights we eat meat that is cooked, boiled or roasted; but this night only roasted meat.' This text can still be found in the early manuscripts of the Haggadah discovered in the Cairo genizah. It refers to the time when the Temple stood and the food eaten at the seder night included the paschal offering, which was roasted. After the Temple was destroyed and the practice of eating a

paschal lamb was discontinued, this question was dropped and another (about reclining) substituted.

Was there a fifth child? The late Lubavitcher Rebbe suggested that there is a fifth child on Pesach. The four children of the Haggadah are all present, sitting round the table. The fifth child is the one who is not there, the child lost through outmarriage and assimilation. Rabbinic tradition tells us that in Egypt, many Jews assimilated and did not want to leave. The Torah uses a phrase to describe the Israelites' departure from Egypt, *Vachamushim alu bnei Yisrael miMitzrayim* (Exodus 13: 18). This is normally translated as 'The Israelites went up out of Egypt armed for battle.' However Rashi, citing earlier authorities, suggests that *hamush* may not mean 'armed.' Instead it may be related to the word *hamesh*, 'five'. The sentence could therefore be translated as, 'Only a fifth of the Israelites left Egypt.'

The rest, he explains, perished in the plague of darkness. The plague itself was less an affliction of the Egyptians than a way of covering the shame of the Israelites, that so many of their number did not want to leave. The loss of Jews through assimilation has been an ongoing tragedy of Jewish history. How do we allude to it on seder night? By silence: the fifth child – the one who is not there.

So the beneath the surface of the Haggadah we find, not four fours, but five fives. In each case there is a missing fifth – a cup, an expression of deliverance, a verse, a question and a child. Each points to something incomplete in our present situation. In the half-century since the Holocaust the Jewish people has emerged from darkness to light. The State of Israel has come into being. The Hebrew language has been reborn. Jews have been brought to safety from the countries where they faced persecution. In the liberal democracies of the West Jews have gained freedom, and even prominence and affluence.

But Israel is not yet at peace. In the Diaspora assimilation continues apace. Many Jews are estranged from their people and their faith. Something is missing from our celebration – the fifth cup, the fifth deliverance, the fifth verse, the fifth question and the fifth child. That is a measure of what is still to be achieved. We have not yet reached our destination. The missing fifths remind us of work still to be done, a journey not yet complete.

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After the Fire: 4 Questions for Parents

This Passover, let's take Gabriel Sassoon's heartbroken words to heart.

by **Slovie Jungreis-Wolff**

We are all reeling from the tragic loss that has rocked the Jewish world. Seven souls, seven angels whose sweet voices I just heard singing "Cry No More Yerushalayim" on a recording released by the Sassoon family. It is difficult for me to keep listening; I wipe away my tears. Who cannot be touched by this tsunami of grief?

In his eulogy, Gabriel Sassoon's voice shook as he described each of his beautiful children who had perished in the tragic fire. He told the anguished crowd, "I want to ask my children for forgiveness. I did my best and my wife did her best. Please, everybody, love your child. That's all that counts. Understand that."

Let us take this heartbroken father's words to heart. To honor the memory of these children, let us take the time before Passover begins to learn how to love each child better. This holiday is our opportunity to engage our sons and daughters, connect with them, and teach them how much God cares for them. The Haggadah guides us in our quest to renew our bond with each child sitting at our table and make them feel cherished and adored.

The following four questions

1. Did I search for my personal chametz? On the eve before the Passover Seder we conduct a search for chametz-leaven. After the search we say, "Any type of leaven that may still be in my possession, that I have not seen or

removed, let it be considered nullified.” We are not just speaking about clearing our physical homes but as we prepare for Passover, we must take time to clean our spiritual homes within our hearts. Passover gives us the energy to do a ‘spiritual cleanse’ as we purge ourselves of negative character traits. Before the holiday begins, take a moment and consider which character traits are causing a disconnect with our children. Is it a short fuse that brings angry reactions instead of calm to our home? Are we impatient so that we seem indifferent and uncaring? Do we push our loved ones away by being negative and judgmental? Do we seem to put technology first by constantly checking iPhones and emails while our family is trying to speak with us? Don’t allow this moment to pass. Set a clear goal to rid yourself of the trait that is preventing you from building the home you have always dreamed of. This will take commitment, hard work and dedication. Do not give up. Your children are waiting for you to raise them with love.

2. Do I create seder-order in my home? Before we begin the Seder, we enumerate the 15 parts of the Seder in order to show how crucial it is for us to give thought to our actions and words. We should always live our days with meaning and perspective. We waste precious time and mess up relationships when we simply coast along and stop paying attention to those we love. This impacts our parenting. When we discipline without thinking, we say and do hurtful things. When we react emotionally, we lose control. Parenting with ‘seder-order’ means that we parent purposefully. Our homes are not filled with chaos, which causes confusion and insecurity. Daily routines and relationships built on respect bring stability. Children thrive when they feel safe. Knowing that parents are consistent, thoughtful about their parenting, and living in harmony provides the ‘seder’ that children need to succeed. Let us plan how to make this happen.

3. Am I tuned in to the emotional needs of my children? As we begin to recite the story of our people, we lift up our Seder plate, uncover our matzahs and say, “This is the poor bread that our forefathers ate in the land of Egypt. Let all who are hungry come and eat. Let all who are needy come and celebrate.” One would think that it is a little late to begin inviting guests to our Seder table at this point. After all, we are seated and ready to begin. Where are we finding hungry and needy people now? If we would open up our eyes and really see the children who are sitting around us, we would notice the hunger for love and a kind word that gnaws at their souls. It is not simply physical hunger that we are being asked to feed. We are being taught to recognize that parents have the responsibility to nourish a child’s desire to feel cared for. Some children require more hugs and kisses. They long for a loving touch that, as children grow, parents forget to give. Others yearn for a kind word, warm laughter, an encouraging smile. Days go by and we have given many directions and commands but a good word has hardly been said. Seder night, look around your table. Give each child your blessing. Embrace your family with the compassion that they so badly need. We speak of the Four Sons. Understand that there are all types of children; each deserves a place in your heart.

4. Do I live my life in color? Jews all over the world sing the melody of ‘Dayenu’. We describe the many incredible miracles that God has showered upon our nation and after each is enumerated, we say one word: Dayenu! – ‘This would have been enough!’ Here lies one of the most valuable life lessons we can ever hope to transmit to our children. If we could teach ourselves to see the many kindnesses that God has granted us from the moment we took our first breath in this world, we would be able to guide our children to be cognizant of the ‘blessing of enough’. Nothing is random; life should never be taken for granted. By breaking down each instant and then learning to say ‘thank You, God’, we come to live life in color instead of black and white. Most of us think about what we are lacking. We easily complain or feel badly for ourselves. When we redirect our eyes to see the good, we take ourselves to a positive place. Our children learn how to appreciate the gifts that God has granted us. This is the road to joy. It begins with our appreciation for our lives.

This Passover, let us dedicate our Seders to these seven holy souls who left this world with a message to us all. Parents, think about the gift of life that we have been given. Every child is precious. As Gabriel Sassoon cried, “The souls of my children live on in my heart and my wife’s heart. But not just with us – in the heart of the entire nation... They are there.”

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from: Shema Yisrael Torah Network <shemalist@shemayisrael.com> to: Potpourri <parshapotpourri@shemayisrael.com> date: Thu, Apr 2, 2015 at 6:26 PM subject: [Parshapotpourri] **Parsha Potpourri** by Ozer Alport - Pesach Pesach - Vol. 10, Issue 25 Compiled by **Oizer Alport**

Kadeish The Pesach Seder begins with Kiddush, which is the first of the four cups of wine that we are required to drink. Rashi writes (Pesachim 99b) that these four cups correspond to the four expressions of redemption mentioned in the Torah (Shemos 6:6-7). However, this begs the question: even we want to commemorate these four different expressions of freedom at the Seder, why must we specifically do so by drinking four cups of wine as opposed to any other food item, such as eating four apples?

Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach explains that the four expressions of redemption aren't four different phrases connoting freedom, but four different levels of freedom, with each one being higher than the one below it. Therefore, our Sages specifically instituted a requirement to drink four cups of wine because wine is unique in that each additional glass isn't simply more of what we've already had, but rather it qualitatively brings additional joy and happiness. With apples or any other food, this isn't the case, as each additional fruit is essentially the same as those which preceded it, and by the third and fourth serving one is already accustomed to it and it adds little additional value. Because we are commemorating the four expressions of redemption and the fact that each represents a higher level of freedom and joy, wine is the appropriate means for doing so.

Alternatively, wine is unique in that it is made from grapes. In their state as grapes, there is nothing particularly special about them, and the blessing recited when eating them is the same as for any other fruit. Only after they have been crushed with the proper amount of pressure does their juice come out, at which point it must be left to ferment in the right environment so that it becomes wine and not vinegar. In this sense, grapes are a perfect metaphor for the experience of the Jewish people in Mitzrayim. The Egyptians constantly pressed and squeezed the Jewish slaves, but their doing so was part of Hashem's master plan to subject the Jewish people to a *ĕāð ääæøi* - iron furnace - in order to purify them and bring out their true greatness.

In fact, the very name Mitzrayim refers to constricting borders, which describes the experience of the Jewish slaves in Egypt. However, just like the liquid secreted by the grapes, the Jews had a choice to succumb to the tests and trials and become vinegar, or to rise and overcome them to maximize their potentials by becoming wine. Because wine is unique in this regard and contains this symbolic message, Chazal specifically commanded us to use it to represent the four expressions of redemption.

Karpas After Kiddush, we wash our hands before eating a vegetable, which is referred to as Karpas. Why do we call it Karpas when it would seem that Yerek - vegetable - would be a more appropriate and accurate name for what we are doing? What does Karpas mean, and do we use this term to refer to our eating of a vegetable dipped in salt water?

In the beginning of Parshas Vayeishev, the Torah records (Bereishis 37:3) that Yaakov made for Yosef a tunic made of "passim." Rashi explains that the word "passim" means fine wool, adding that it is similar to the term Karpas which is used in Megillas Esther (1:6) to describe the opulent decor at Achashverosh's royal party. Achashverosh certainly wasn't hanging vegetables from his walls; he was hanging decorations made of fine wool, which is what Karpas means.

What does fine wool have to do with dipping a vegetable into saltwater at the beginning of the Seder? In his commentary on Mishneh Torah (Hilchos Chometz U'Matzah 8:2), Rabbeinu Manoach writes that the dipping of the Karpas in saltwater is supposed to remind us of the dipping of Yosef's tunic in blood by his brothers (Bereishis 37:31). In light of this, we now understand that Karpas means fine wool, not vegetables, but we use the term to remind us of the sale of Yosef into slavery by his brothers. As we are about to begin the section of the Haggadah known as Maggid, which begins with the declaration that we were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, it is necessary to first understand the historical background which brought us to that stage, namely the sale of Yosef which caused our ancestors to descend to Egypt. In order to commemorate this, we dip a vegetable in salt water and call it Karpas.

She'lo echad bilvad amad aleinu l'chaloseinu (Haggadah) In the Maggid section of the Haggadah, we declare that Pharaoh was not the only one who rose up to annihilate us, as in every generation oppressors attempt to destroy us, but Hashem saves us from their hands. We proceed to prove this statement by noting that while Pharaoh's decree was

only directed against the male Jews, Lavan wished to uproot the entire nation. These statements are difficult to understand. After all of the tragic anti-Semitic pogroms and persecutions that we have endured, it is unfortunately self-evident and quite an understatement to say that Pharaoh was not the only tyrant to threaten us. What point is the author of the Haggadah trying to convey to us? Further, in what way does the fact that Lavan also attempted to destroy us constitute a proof to the claim that our enemies seek to annihilate us in every generation?

Rav Yissocher Frand elucidates these proclamations by pointing out that most popular ideologies begin with one person who comes up with a novel idea and uses it to launch a movement and attract a following. Even though millions of people may come to adopt the belief system, it ultimately originated with one man and his teachings. However, while this is true of virtually all "isms," there is one exception: anti-Semitism. Throughout the generations, there have been countless people who have hated the Jews, but each of them had his own distinct motivation. Unlike other movements, anti-Semitism was not just the brainchild of one individual; some hated the Jews because of our success, while others hated us because they said we are racist and discriminatory, and yet others hated us because of our appearance. Although they all came to the same common conclusion, the underlying motivations behind their hatred were vastly different.

The Haggadah's declaration that "not only one (Pharaoh) stood up against us" is making this point, that anti-Semitism is not the invention of one individual. In each generation our enemies come up with new complaints and new reasons to hate us, but the bottom line remains steady and unchanging. With this understanding, the flow of the Haggadah makes perfect sense. After this declaration, we continue to note that long before Pharaoh, Lavan also wanted to destroy us. If Pharaoh was merely following in Lavan's footsteps, he would have sought to uproot the entire nation as Lavan wanted to do, but as proof for the statement we just made, we note that Pharaoh had his own approach, his own iteration of anti-Semitism, as evidenced by the fact that he only wanted to kill the male Jews.

Rabbi Frand explains that the Haggadah extrapolates from here to inform us that although other movements come and go, there is one "ism" that has remained constant in every generation: anti-Semitism. Beginning with Eisav and Lavan, continuing through Pharaoh and Nevuchadnezzar, followed by the Greeks, Romans, Muslims, Catholics, Ukrainians, Nazis, and Arabs, the Jews have been hunted and persecuted in unparalleled fashion for thousands of years. This teaches us that all of the purported rationales behind their anti-Semitism are only excuses. In reality, it is not our appearance or our success that irks them to no end, but rather the fact that Hashem chose us as His nation, which is the real reason that they seek to eliminate us. In every generation anti-Semitism appears in a new incarnation, but just as we can count on their hatred to manifest itself, so too can we count on Hashem to miraculously rescue us from their hands.

Uv'nei Yisroel halchu bayabasha b'soch hayam v'hamayim lahem chomah miy'minam u'mismolam (Shemos 14:29) The Medrash teaches (Yalkut Shimoni 234) that when the Jewish people were crossing the Red Sea, the prosecuting angel argued that it was inappropriate for Hashem to perform miracles on their behalf since they had worshipped idolatry in Egypt. This argument is difficult to understand. If their idolatrous practices represented a reason that Hashem shouldn't perform miracles on their behalf, why did he wait until this point to make this argument instead of pressing his claim during the entire year that Hashem was performing the ten plagues on their behalf?

The Meshech Chochmah answers by pointing out a curious apparent contradiction. With regard to commandments which are violated through actions, such as idolatry and forbidden relationships, the Torah prescribes an appropriate punishment, such as death, lashes, and kares (spiritual excision), for each transgression. On the other hand, no such punishment is given in conjunction with mitzvos that are transgressed through corrupt character traits, such as forbidden gossip or hating another Jew.

However, this dichotomy applies only to sins committed by an individual. Regarding communal sins, the rule is reversed. The Yerushalmi teaches (Peah 1:1) that the generation of Dovid HaMelech was righteous, yet they still fell in battle because they spread rumors about one another. The generation of Achav was full of wicked idolaters, yet they emerged successful and unscathed from their battles because they didn't gossip about one another. He explains that if the nation is corrupt in idolatry or adultery, Hashem still dwells among them in the midst of their spiritual impurity, but if they are stricken with bad character traits, He metaphorically abandons them to return to the Heavens.

Because of the communal severity of interpersonal sins, the first Temple was destroyed for the cardinal sins of murder, idolatry, and forbidden relationships, yet it was rebuilt relatively quickly. The second Temple was destroyed for the sin of gossip and baseless hatred, and has yet to be rebuilt (Yoma 9b). Similarly, Hashem forgave the Jewish people for the sin of idolatrously worshipping the golden calf, but He didn't

forgive them for the sin of the spies, which involved negative speech and a lack of gratitude, and decreed that they would die in the wilderness as a result.

With this introduction, the Meshech Chochmah explains that in Egypt, the Jewish people were steeped in the 49th level of spiritual impurity and worshipped idolatry just like the Egyptians. Nevertheless, they had one saving grace, in that they dwelled peacefully and didn't gossip about one another (Vayikra Rabbah 32:5). As a result, Hashem forgave their other communal sins and miraculously performed the plagues to bring about their salvation, and the prosecuting angel had no grounds for his argument. However, when they were trapped at the Red Sea by the pursuing Egyptians, the Medrash (Yalkut Shimoni 233) teaches that they divided into four groups who fought about the appropriate strategy. Only at this time, when the Jewish nation lacked unity, was the prosecuting angel able to argue that they should be judged for their individual sins, such as idolatry, and Hashem should not perform further miracles on their behalf. In these difficult times for our nation, let us strengthen ourselves in our pursuit of unity and love for our fellow Jews, and in that merit, Hashem should perform miracles for us just as He did for our ancestors in Egypt.

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Mah Nishtanah—The Real Question of The Seder by Rabbi Raphi Mandelstam

For many of us, the pinnacle of the Seder is the famous Mah Nishtanah which the children ask to trigger the telling of the story of Yetzi'at Mitzrayim. Many commentators on the Haggadah notice that the four questions are more complex than they seem and require elucidation. For starters, what are the answers to these questions? Recall that our four questions are aimed at understanding why we have Matzah, Maror, the extra dipping of the vegetable into the saltwater, and the leaning at the Seder. Some answer that the paragraph following the four questions, Avadim Hayinu, answers our questions. However, Avadim Hayinu is but a one line description of how we were slaves who were freed because of Hashem's help. The simple understanding of that paragraph does not seem to provide a comprehensive answer to the four questions. Our question remains—where do we answer our four questions?

Perhaps, the answers can be found in Rabban Gamliel's statement that we must mention the Korban Pesach, Maror, and Matzah, in order to fulfill our requirement of Sippur Yetzi'at Mitzrayim. Although this statement can explain why we have Matzah and Maror at the Seder, it does not explain why we lean and make an extra dipping. In addition, if this explains why we eat Matzah and Maror, why was it not placed immediately following the four questions?

These perplexing questions have led many Meforashim, including the Abarbanel, to suggest that the Mah Nishtanah is not really four different questions which require four different answers; rather, it is four different applications of one major question: "Is this a night of slavery or a night of freedom?" The questions are expressions of confusion as to how we can do things which seem to contradict each other. How can we be eating Matzah, which reminds us of our freedom, and also eat Maror, which reminds us of our slavery? In addition, how can we eat the Matzah and the Maror together during Koreich, while at the same time eating Charoset, which sweetens the Maror? Also, why do we lean for certain things but not others? It seems as though we are confused as to whether we are slaves or a free nation.

To further develop our question, we can point out that in addition to the contradictions between the different aspects of the Seder, each aspect seems to contradict itself. On the one hand, Matzah is the bread that we eat to remember our freedom, yet on the other hand it is "Lachma Anya," poor man's bread. Seforno points out that Matzah is not only what we ate on our way out of Mitzrayim, but it is also what we ate as slaves, because we did not have time to let our dough rise when we were slaves. Matzah is a remembrance of freedom and slavery at the same time.

Even the Maror, which seems to remind us solely of our slavery, hints to freedom as well. We are familiar with the promise that Hashem made to Avraham Avinu at the Berit Bein HaBetarim that Avraham's descendants would be slaves for four hundred years (BeReishit 15:13). However, we know that we were slaves in Mitzrayim for only 210 years. What happened to the other 190 years in which we were supposed to be in slaves? The Beit HaLevi explains that out of Hashem's kindness, he made our work harder than it was supposed to be so that we would be able to leave 190 years early. Therefore, the bitterness of the slavery, which is expressed by the Maror, actually hastened our Ge'ulah from Mitzrayim.

As we have seen, the real question of the Mah Nishtanah is not why things are different than usual, but why those differences seem to contradict each other. The answer is that "Avadim HaYinu," we were slaves. We start the night as slaves, as we demonstrate by the poor man's bread and the Maror, but we also have elements of freedom, as we mention that "VaYotzi'anu Hashem MiSham," meaning that Hashem took us out of Mitzrayim. Although we start off the Seder as slaves, we end the night as free men who can eat the Maror together with the Matzah and Charoset, because despite the bitterness of slavery, we recognize that we became a free nation. The night is not a contradiction, but rather a transition from slavery to redemption.

The Brisker Rav used to say that the hardest Mitzvah of the year is Sippur Yetzi'at Mitzrayim, because "Chayav Adam Lir'ot Et Atzmo Ke'ilu Hu Yatzah MiMitzrayim," meaning that we must see ourselves as if we left Mitzrayim. The only way we could imagine ourselves leaving Egypt is by realizing that the different Mitzvot and Minhagim of the Seder are meant to help us feel the transition from Avdut to Cheirut, from slavery to freedom. If we are able to truly recognize this, we will be able to conclude our Seder with a real sense of thanks and Hallel to Hashem.

from: Office of Rabbi Berel Wein <info@jewishdestiny.com> reply-to: info@jewishdestiny.com date: Thu, Apr 2, 2015 at 12:03 PM subject: Erev Pesach 5775- Rabbi Berel Wein

Home In My Opinion PESACH **Rabbi Wein's Weekly Blog** PESACH

Someone remarked to me recently that he did not see or feel how anything new could be discussed at his Seder table – everything that could have been said and analyzed had been said over all of the past decades of his commemorating Pesach. I told him that I thought he had too narrow a view concerning the commemoration of Pesach. The broad human and particularly Jewish issues of bondage, freedom, individual and national purpose and destiny, renew themselves in our lives on an almost daily basis. Our great young associate Rabbi, Itiel Goldvicht, had a discussion with me about the enslavement of the present younger generation to texting and to their smart phones. He pointed out to me that in spite of all bans, filters and other methods meant to free one from the grip and thrall of these devices, their constant use has become almost impulsive and obsessive, certainly amongst the student generation here in Israel. And, I am certain that this is true as well regarding the student population in the rest of the current Western world. Slavery takes on different forms and disguises. There is a great difference between slavery and work. Slavery is a state of compulsion and obsession that stunts the creativity of the human mind and soul and leads to disenchantment, boredom and eventual physical, moral, physical and mental deterioration. One of the great attributes of the holiday of Pesach is that it allows us a new and fresh view of things. By cleaning out the chametz of our homes and souls we open ourselves up to new vistas and fresh challenges that can inspire us and deliver us to a higher level of purpose and accomplishment. The Seder allows for a family discussion of issues, since the Haggadah itself raises almost all possible human issues – family, tradition, Torah, the land of Israel, the purpose of Jewish life and of an individual's existence, the recognition and understanding of evil, and the ultimate human necessity for reliance on faith in the Creator. These issues are extremely relevant in today's world and affect every family and home. For most of the year we have little time or inclination to dwell on these matters for the distractions and obligations of life are many and omnipresent. But on this night of the Seder there is time, mental capacity and psychological freedom to engage with these issues. My wife, of blessed memory, told me that when she was ten or eleven years old a great rabbi was a guest for the Pesach Seder at her home. The great rabbi talked to her, taught her melodies to sing, gave her advice for life and instilled in her an appreciation for the depth of Jewish tradition. She often told me that this Seder experience influenced her

greatly and was a defining moment in her life. She did not attend a Jewish school and was a lonely Orthodox, Sabbath-observing child in the midst of a completely non-observant Jewish group of friends and fellow public-school students. She told me that the Pesach Seder experience that year fortified her for the rest of her years in high school and college and gave her an enormous gift of self-confidence, identity and Jewish pride. I think that that is exactly what the Pesach Seder should accomplish for all of us. The rabbis of old enjoined us that the more we speak about the Exodus from Egypt, the more praiseworthy we become. This is in line with the further statement in the Haggadah that: "in every generation one must be able to see one's own self present and participating in the Exodus from Egypt." The Seder is meant to make the Exodus from Egypt relevant to everyone sitting at the Seder table, even today more than three thousand years later. It transports us back in time, as the very same rituals bring the past to bear upon our current situations and challenges. The Exodus from Egypt is an ongoing story and not merely a one-time commemoration of a past event. That is the secret of the strength of the Seder experience and of its fresh new quality year in and year out. There is always something new to be said and expressed at the Seder table. And it is this constant renewal of ideas and traditions that gives Pesach its unique ability to represent true freedom and psychological, spiritual and mental liberty. Those ancient rituals provide the tools for dealing with the relevant and seemingly modern problems that face us. The Seder night should be treasured, appreciated and loved. I wish you all a happy and kosher Pesach. Rabbi Berel Wein Subscribe to our blog via email or RSS to get more posts like this one.

from: Chanan Morrison <ravkooklist@gmail.com> reply-to: rav-kook-list+owners@googlegroups.com to: **Rav Kook List** <Rav-Kook-List@googlegroups.com> date: Wed, Apr 1, 2015 at 3:45 AM subject: [Rav Kook List] Pesach: "Because of This"

Pesach: "Because of This" After commanding us to commemorate the date we left Egypt, the Torah also instructs us to transmit these memories to the next generation.

"On that day you shall tell your child, 'It is because of this that God acted for me when I left Egypt.'" (Ex. 13:8) The wording, however, is unclear. "Because of this" - what does the word 'this' refer to? What is the reason that, for its sake, God performed the signs and miracles in Egypt?

Memories for All Generations

One might think that the sole function of the ten plagues was to rescue the Israelites from persecution and slavery. In fact, the true goal of the miracles in Egypt goes far beyond the needs of that generation. Those historic events were meant to create an eternal inheritance for all generations. Their purpose is achieved as each generation preserves these national memories and transmits them to the next generation.

This is how the verse should be understood. The word 'this' refers back to the beginning of the verse. "It is because of this" - so that "you will tell your child" - "that God acted for me when I left Egypt." The ultimate purpose of the signs and wonders in Egypt is fulfilled as each generation absorbs the elevated impressions of those miracles, drawing from them their great light and holiness.

According to the Haggadah's exegesis, "because of this" refers to the special foods that we eat to recall the Exodus:

"The Passover Seder may not be conducted until the time when matzah and bitter herbs are set before you." This does not contradict the explanation presented above; it simply adds an additional nuance. We commemorate the Exodus and recount its story to the next generation when we can physically point to the matzah and bitter herbs on Passover night. According to this explanation, the purpose of the Exodus is accomplished when we experientially transmit to our children the smells, tastes, and memories of that historic event.

(Silver from the Land of Israel. Adapted from Olat Re'iyah vol. I, p. 39)