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Rabbi Yisroel Reisman - 5772

... 3. I would like to share with you an idea regarding the Leil HaSeder. This is an idea that came to me this year as a thought and I think that it is significant. There is a Mitzva of Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim which is discussing Yetzias Mitzrayim on the night of Pesach at the Seder. The question with which we begin is a question of whether that Sippur that telling of the story requires a certain amount of Chiddush, requires that the person has a certain amount of new insight or new Chiddush regarding Yetzias Mitzrayim or no maybe the word Sippur is just to relate the story.

The Malbim who is the authority of this type of definition of words, writes in Tehillim 19 the following. He says in Lashon Kadosh we find the Lashon of (להגיד) as in Tehillim 92:3 (להגיד בבקר חסדך). (להגיד) 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 (השמים, מספרים כבוד-קל) 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 לבנך, ביום ההוא). L'hagid, so you are supposed to say something new. But the Torah also says in Shemos 10:2 (ולמען תספר באזני בנך וכן-בנך). 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.

I once heard from Rav Hutner who said that the difference between a Talmid listening to his Rebbe and just an ordinary person listening to a Shiur is when a Rebbe says something which the listener has already heard and he already knows, if the listener is just an ordinary person he will tune it out. He will listen halfheartedly. He will not listen with any specific interest. On the other hand if it is a Talmid and he knows that this is an idea which his Rebbe is fond of teaching, often teaches, and is important to him, then the Talmid will hear something new each and every time. A new appreciation, a new depth, a new insight and look at his Rebbe saying something which he knows is

coming but with a new appreciation. That idea, that appreciation, is something unique from a Talmid to a Rebbe and something which we need to work on in our serving HKB"H in our learning.

I remember seeing Rav Moshe Feinstein on a Shabbos afternoon sitting with a Mikraos Gedolos Chumash learning Rashi & learning the Ramban and I couldn't help but wonder here is Rav Moshe who knows Shas Baal Peh literally. He knows the Shulchan Aruch. What is he doing, looking again at the Chumash again with the Rashi and Ramban that he has seen and studied so many times? I appreciate the idea now. The idea that when Rav Moshe learned it again, it was a Talmid listening to his Rebbe, his Rebbe Rashi, his Rebbe the Ramban. Hearing the same words, looking at the same words, and with some deeper appreciation.

This idea is the idea of the Avoda that we have to do. Similar to what Rav Moshe said about the Chavtin. About the Korban that the Kohen brings on his inaugural day and which the Kohen Gadol brings every day. Every day to have a new appreciation of that which he has. That is quite similar and identical to the idea that we are talking about now. The idea of something old coming to you with a freshness, a deeper appreciation, and a deeper meaning.

From: Torah Musings <newsletter@torahmusings.com>

date: Mon, Mar 27, 2017

subject: Torah Musings Daily Digest

Seder on the Rooftops

by R. Gil Student

Some modern thinkers—mainly Jewish universalists—express discomfort in the Seder recitation of “Shefokh chamasekha, Pour out Your wrath.” In this passage of the Haggadah, we call on God to punish the heathens who do not recognize Him and who destroyed the Temple in Jerusalem. While this is a direct biblical quote (Ps. 79:6-7), and addresses the gentile nations that destroyed the Temple, it seems at a superficial reading to be directed at all Gentiles, which makes liberals uneasy. Some have revised this text, substituting a more positive version for the biblical passage. The Schechter Haggadah (Jerusalem, 2009, p. 268) quotes this nineteenth century German alternative text: “Pour out Your spirit on all flesh / May all nations come to serve You / Together in one language / Because the Lord is the Sovereign of Nations.” This entire attempt not only misreads the biblical text as anti-Gentile rather than anti-destroyer, it fails to ask why this passage is placed right after the meal, as we open the door before we continue Hallel.

Many possible explanations have been offered. Or Zaru'a explains that we have largely completed the extensive discussion of Egypt and now we curse their evil. Meiri connects the four cups of wine to the four exiles we have endured. As we pour the fourth cup, we ask God to avenge the persecution we have endured in those exiles. The Rema (Orach Chaim 480:1) says that we open the door as a show of faith in God's protection. We recite “Pour out Your wrath” to show our faith that God will bring the final redemption. (All these and more are brought in Rav Menachem Kasher's Haggadah Shelemah, pp. 179-180.)

In his recently published Haggadah Yesamach Av, **Rav Eliyahu B. Shulman** offers a simple but fascinating historically-based explanation. The Gemara (Pesachim 85b-86a) says that in the time of the Temple, Hallel split the roofs of Jerusalem. Even though people were not allowed to eat the Pesach sacrifice on their roofs, they would eat the meal inside their homes and then go onto their roofs to sing Hallel. Imagine the entire city full of families singing on their roofs.

Rav Shulman quotes Rav Shmuel Baruch Eliezerov, who in his Devar Shmuel (Pesachim 86a) says that his grandfather, Rav Yosef Salant, used this historical practice to explain our current practice of opening our door for “Pour out Your wrath.” The Pesach sacrifice has to be eaten in the home, with the group. Therefore, people would close their doors to ensure that everyone ate the food in the correct place. After they finished eating, they opened their doors to go up to their roofs and sing Hallel. We open our doors

in commemoration of the ancient practice of singing Hallel on the rooftops. Rav Shulman adds that nowadays we open our doors and see that we are in exile, not Jerusalem, and in our grief ask God to avenge our plight. He further explains why Hallel is interrupted with the meal.

The Mishnah (Pesachim 116b) records a debate over how much of Hallel to recite before the meal. According to Beis Shammai, just the first paragraph (Ps. 113); according to Beis Hillel, also the second paragraph (Ps. 114, "Be-tzeis Yisrael mi-Mitzrayim, When Israel went forth from Egypt"). On the one hand, we need to recite Hallel over the Pesach sacrifice, which was the meal. On the other hand, people wanted to say Hallel on the roofs. Therefore, we start Hallel before the meal, say a little, eat the meal, and then finish Hallel (in Temple times on the rooftops). According to Beis Shammai, one paragraph suffices for starting Hallel. According to Beis Hillel, we include the second paragraph which discusses the Exodus so we finish the Maggid (story) section of the evening on the second cup of wine, before the meal.

When we think about how the Seder progressed in ancient times, our current practice seems like a faint shadow of its former glory. Each family conducted its own Seder and then joined with the community for glorious Hallel. Today, we open the door to start the communal phase, only to realize in frustration that due to our exile we must return to our tables and forego the experience. Liberal revisions of the Shefokh Chamasekha passage fail completely to express this frustration of exile and the hope for rebuilding the Temple and reinstituting the sacrificial system.

Shabbat Hagadol: Shiur - Mesirat Nefesh

based on Shabbat U'Moed, by Harav Yitzchok Kossowsky, zt"l

Rabbi Nisson Shulman

Questions about the Korban Pesach; Why in advance? "Hen yiskelunu"? Why roasted by fire? Why no bone could be broken? Why the importance of "habura"? Why Rabban Gamliel and Todos ish Romi wanted to retain form of "korban Pesach" despite Chachamim objection? Why time of bama when you could bring sacrifices personally, the Pesach was an exception? Public, not merely private Judaism... Jewish pride. Mesirat nefesh... Answering all questions with this premise...

SHABBAT HAGADOL: SHIUR - MESIRAT NEFESH

[This is a Shiur -- The idea comes from Shabbat Umoed, a wonderful two volume sefer in the old style of shiurim and drush written by my wife's grandfather, Rav Yitzchok Kossowsky zt"l, who was the Volkovisker Rav and in 1933 accepted the call of the Federation of Synagogues of South Africa to be their Rav and Av Bet Din.]

Much is made about questions on Pesach. The mitzvah of sipur yetziat Mitzrayim can only be fulfilled if it is told to another, in dialogue form, and that is why questions on Pesach are so important. I have some questions about the korban Pesach about which the original Seder was centered and towards which it was focused. (Here it is appropriate to explain how the four questions were changed after the destruction of the Temple, using sources such as: Mishnah, Pesachim 116a, Rashbam ad loc., Rambam Hilchot Hametz Umatza 8:2 where he lists all 5 questions, since one of them [tzeli] falls away in galut, and the change in his Nusach haHagada, since the heading of this section is Nusach haHagada shenahagu ba Yisrael bizman hagalut, kach hi.)

My questions are as follows:

1. We were required to separate the Pascal sacrifice four days in advance, ...beasor lachodesh haze veyikchu lachem ish se lebet avot se labayit (Shemot 12:3)... This openly courted danger, since we were to sacrifice and eat the "gods" of Egypt. Why? God does not require us to seek peril! Why put ourselves in danger? Hen nizbach es toavat Mitzrayim velo yiskelunu? Why did God insist? Hayecha, eyn Yisrael yotzeim mikan ad sheyishhatu elohey Mitzrayim leeyneyhem... (Shemot Rabba 16).

2. The offering had to be only roasted by fire. What's wrong with a cooked offering? Furthermore, as Rashi indicates, the Torah gives special

importance to this mitzvah by adding a negative prohibition to the positive mitzvah, Veachlu et habasar balayla haze tzeli esh, al tochlu mimenu na ubashel mevushal bamayim ki im tzeli esh (Shemot 12:8-9). Rashi adds, lemaala gazar alav bemitzvat ase, vekan hosif lo taase.

3. No bone could be broken in it. Why is this?

4. This is the only offering where habura plays an important role! In fact, there is no other mitzvah that must be done particularly in a habura. Even for davening, a minyan isn't required! It merely gives us the opportunity to recite added prayers that are in the nature of public proclamations and declarations such as Kaddish and Kedusha and Barchu. But an individual fulfills the basic mitzvah of prayer just a group does. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob's prayers are as worthy as those of Kelal Yisroel. But the basic essential mitzvah of korban Pesach can only be fulfilled by a group, and with advance invitations. Why?

5. Finally: The Pesach went out of use when the Bet Hamikdash was destroyed. It appears the Rabbi Gamliel of Yavneh wanted to retain the form of korban Pesach and the sages refused. In fact, there was an earlier precedent for this discussion. The Talmud relates that Todos ish Romi – Todos of Rome – tried to imitate the korban Pesach for the diaspora Jews of Rome, and our sages almost excommunicated him for attempting to make a private korban Pesach (Pesachim 53). For the korban Pesach, like all other korbanot, depended on the Bet Hamikdash. You couldn't bring an ola, a chatas, a shelamim privately while the Temple stood. After it was destroyed, we declare, Uneshalma parim sefatenu. Our prayers have to take the place of the korban Pesach. We recite in the musaph prayer, Umipne chataenu galinu meartzenu venisrachaknu meal admasenu,... So it was forbidden to duplicate the service in the Holy Temple anywhere else, and now that it is destroyed it is forbidden to duplicate that service anywhere in the world.

What about before the Bet Hamikdash was built? We lived in Israel many years from the time of Joshua's entry into the Promised Land until Solomon finally built the Temple. During all this time, we had a sanctuary in Shiloh, and it was destroyed and moved elsewhere, until finally the Mikdash was built. The sanctuary in Shiloh was the continuation of the Mishkan of the desert. Now what was the status of korbanot during this time? Did they then have to be offered only in Shiloh? All korbanot during that time had an interesting status, because while community korbanot like the tamid of morning and evening were indeed offered only in Shiloh, yet throughout all that time every Jew could also set up his own private altar and bring voluntary offerings such as thank offerings (todah), peace offerings (shelamim), in his own home, in his front or back yard! This special status changed when the Temple was built, and all offerings could only be offered in Jerusalem at the Temple. But until then, it was permissible to sacrifice privately as the heart moved each Jew. What about the Pesach offering? Could a family go out into their front yard and bring the korban Pesach on their private bama? Could they use this bama, or altar, for the Pesach Seder and the Pascal Lamb?

The answer is, that while all other kinds of sacrifices could be brought on this type of private altar, the korban Pesach was different. It could not be brought privately, but like the community offerings could only be brought in Shilo, (or Nov, or Givon), wherever the sanctuary was located at that particular time. And finally, when the sanctuary moved to Jerusalem, it could be offered only in Jerusalem. Now it seems reasonable that a community offering like the daily tamid offering, which stood for the entire people of Israel, surely should have its place only in the central sanctuary such as Shiloh. But the Pesach offering was a family gathering. It was not one offering for the whole people of Israel, but rather that each family or group of families brought its own. Why then couldn't they bring it on the private bama? [Note: At the end of this shiur is a very brief outline of the history of the sanctuaries and bama gedolah and ketana since our entry into the Promised Land and until the Bet Hamikdash was built].

I believe the answer to this last question will also answer all our previous questions as well.

At the beginning of the 19th and through the 20th centuries there was a movement called Haskala, which gained great strength at that time. Its motto, coined by Yehuda Leib Gordon, was "Be a man in the street, and a Jew at home." Its creed was to live Judaism in a way that did not bring it to the attention of the non-Jews amongst whom we dwelt.

This movement did not consider Judaism a matter of pride, but something private, and all too often something of which to be ashamed. To our Synagogue members, many of whom escaped or survived the holocaust, and all of whom know a great deal of Jewish history, I need not describe how quickly members of that movement slid into assimilation. In fact, the founder of the movement, Moses Mendelssohn, though observant of Mitzvot himself, had no Jewish grandchildren, since all but one of his children converted and in the second generation they were all Christian. In Germany, there was established a "Society for Suiting Judaism to Higher German Culture" and all the members ended by deciding by vote to convert to Christianity, which they all did.

Our Jewish people are required to be Jews, and human beings, Yiden and Mentchen, both at home and in the street. We say this in our prayers and we know this in Jewish history especially in the character of the heroes we most admire. Leolam yehey adam yere shamayim baseser ubagaluy.

The most admired moment of Joseph's story is when he declares Ivri anochi, vees Elokey hashamayim ani yare.

Jacob did not hide his Jewishness. Im Lavan garti... "vetaryag mitzvot shamarti" (see Rashi) Ve'et Yehuda shalach lefanav... "letaken lo bes talmud shemisham tetze horaah". In fact, Yaakov read kariat shema before the highest officials in Egypt when he beheld his son Joseph after the many years of separation. And in Tehilim, we read Vaadabra edosecha neged melachim velo evosh (Psalms 150).

The Shulchan Aruch gives the Jewish motto at the very beginning. It is actually a quote from the More Nevuchim. Veal yevosh mipne hamaligim alav beavodas hashem yisbarach.

Jewish pride is more than an admirable quality. It leads directly to kiddush Hashem. The Yarmulkes on the street are only small ways of demonstration of pride. There are much larger ways. The Russian Jews could have had ample justification to be like the Marannos! Their pride in Jewishness, even of those who were not observant of mitzvot, was the most powerful weapon with which they opened the doors of Russia to their emigration. Now, when we see latent anti-Semitism coming out into the open, we need Jewish pride more than ever. We in America have led lives sheltered from real anti-Semitism, but Europe today is a hotbed of hate towards Jews. France especially, even Switzerland, and England too, have grown so anti-Semitic as to produce for many Jews a "trapped" feeling. Those who are not driven into assimilation by this feeling; those who will not be cowed into retreat and practicing Judaism quietly and away from public view, but who retain pride in Judaism, courage and backbone; deserve our admiration and encouragement. Russian Jews, for instance did not have to give up their lives for small matters of Jewish pride and demonstration, yet that is what many of them did! And those with such pride were ready to start all over again, with challenges of a new language, a new culture, new problems and fears – and yet that is what so many did!

Another example: Think back to the war. There was a holocaust report in America prepared by a man by the name of Finger, called the Finger Report. The net result of that report was to create a feeling that American Jews will have to give a reckoning for every public demonstration they failed to make for the sake of saving our brothers and sisters in Europe!

If we only had true Jewish pride, at that time; if we had only learned it from our forefathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and Joseph who was in Egypt and who was publicly faithful to his faith and fathers. But the Jews in Egypt after Joseph began to forget this. In the course of the decades and centuries of persecution, they began to hide the fact that they were Jewish if they could. Or at least, they would act like Jews only where it was safe to do so. It

was to restore this pride in public worship and demonstration of Judaism for which the laws of the Pesach offering were made.

Thus: Veyikhu ish se lebet avot, se labayit... (Shemot 12:3.6) is a demand for a public demonstration. Vehaya lachem lemishmeres ad arba asar yom... The pride must be sustained.

Tzli esh. Zevach Pesach hu laHashem (Ibid., 12:9-11,27). The most distinctive feature of roasting the korban Pesach over an open fire is the aroma. It is not hidden in a pot, nor inside the house, but roasted on an open fire outside for all to see and there is no mistaking the aroma! Everyone is to see what is being done and what it is!

Veetzem lo tishberu bo (Ibid., 12:46), ... Rosho al keraav veal kirbo (Ibid., 12:10) It must remain whole so that everyone can identify what it is, and there should be no mistake.

Therefore it was to be eaten in a public feast. Velakach hu ushecheno hakarov el beso bemichsas nefashos (Ibid., 12:4). It is not enough to eat it as families. It had to be eaten publicly, by appointment, outside, with neighbors.

Vehaya ki tomru alechem benechem ma haavoda hazos lachem (Ibid., 12:26), They are really asking, "Why the public demonstration?"

And you shall say, Vaamartem zevach Pesach hu laHashem. (Ibid., 12:27)

That's why bamas yachid is fine for all other worship. But Pesach worship is public and cannot be offered on a bamas yachid. For it must be a public demonstration of our pride in our Judaism and Jewish heritage.

It is interesting that our sages give extra emphasis to the roasting of the Pesach. Rashi, on the pasuk, Veachlu et habasar balayla haze, tzeli esh, al tochlu mimenu na ubashel mevushal bamayim, ki im tzeli esh, (Shemot 12:8,9) comments and says: lemaala gazar alav bemitzvat ase, ve kan hosif alav lo taase, al tochlu mimenu ki im tzeli esh. Rashi thus points out the extra importance given to the roasting mitzvah. It is emphasized by the repetition of the passage and by the Lo Taase after the Ase. The Midrash explains the added emphasis on Tzeli, and says that it was because of Abraham who was himself thrown by Nimrod into the burning fiery furnace, Bishvil Avraham shehitzaltiv mikivshan haesh. (Shemot Rabbah, 15.)

The Midrash actually is making a pun. tzeli-hatzala. It is clear that our rabbis understood a clear and direct connection between the Pascal offering and the episode of Abraham saved from Nimrod's fiery furnace.

This connection is expressed by our sages in the Midrash: Beshaa sheamar Hakadosh Baruch Hu leMoshe lishhot hapesach, amar lo Moshe; Ribon Haolam, davar ze heach ani yachol laasoto,.... Sheneemar et toavat mitzrayim nizbach leeynehem velo yiskelunu? Amar lo Hakadosh Baruch Hu, hayecha, eyn Yisrael yotzim mikaan at sheyishhatu elohe Mitzrayim leeyneyhem. (Shemot Rabbah 16).

God required the mesirat nefesh of defying death at the hands of the Egyptians by slaughtering their god, in order for us to prove that we were worth redeeming. On this account we were found worthy of being taken to God as a people. Sinai was our reward.

Pesach, then, is the symbol and the foundation of the fierce pride in our people and faith, which leads to mesirat nefesh. And so it was commanded to be eaten, burned on the fire, in order to remind us of the mesirat nefesh of the Jew, represented by the readiness of Abraham our forefather to sacrifice himself. The lesson is that just as Abraham withstood the test, so must we.

The mitzvah of tzeli esh has since that time become the symbol of mesirat nefesh for our people. It has enabled us to survive through the centuries of hardship and persecution. And Israel has given it a special place in the significance of its mitzvot.

The people of Israel have called the holiday of the korban Pesach by the name of that korban. The mitzvah of matzah is commanded for all the days of Passover, whereas the sacrifice of the Pascal lamb is only the first night. Yet we call it hag haPesach, and only rarely hag hamatzot. In the Torah the name of the holiday is almost always hag hamatzot, and it is only called the holiday of Pesach once. Yet we insist on calling it hag haPesach, not hag hamatzot. Even after the Temple was destroyed and we were exiled from our

land, although we no longer had the korban Pesach but only matzah, we nevertheless insisted on continuing to call the holiday after the Pascal Lamb. Furthermore: when on Passover night we indicate that anyone who has not explained the three basic items of Passover has not fulfilled his obligation of the Hagaddah, we place Pesach first, then Matzah Umaror.

The intention of our sages is clear. It is to plant deep in our hearts the spirit of devotion to God and the awareness of the importance of the readiness to sacrifice for our faith. It is to emphasize the actions of Abraham in this connection, and the willingness of our fathers even before they were to be redeemed from Egypt, to sacrifice themselves for the sake of heaven.

Now we can understand an interesting episode in our history. Todos ish Romi hinhig et beney Romi leechol gedayim mekulasim beleyley Pesachim. Shalhu lo, ilmale Todos ata, gozartanu alecha niduy. Sheata maachil et Yisrael kodshim bahutz. (Pesachim 53).

The Talmud then asks what is meant by the fact that Todos was a big man; does that mean a powerful man, intimidating the sages, or a great man, whom they respected, and the Talmud answers that he was a great and respected man. And they bring evidence from another statement of Todos, Od zu darash Todos ish Romi, ma rau Hananya Mishael veAzaria shemasru nafsham al kedushat hashem lekvishan haesh? Nasu kal vahomer leatzmam mitzefardeim....

If Todos was such a great man, why was he so stubborn? Didn't he realize that he was violating a great prohibition, kodshim bahutz? And furthermore, he must have made other statements if he was a great man, why did they select the quotation from Hananiah Mishael and Azarya as the most important evidence of his greatness?

Let us glance at the period in which he lived. The same story is brought elsewhere in the Talmud, (Berachot 19), and there it is brought with the statement Shalach lo Shimon ben Shetach. Shimon ben Shetach lived at the time the Temple stood. So Todos was actually alive before the destruction of the Temple.

These settlers of Judea who lived in Rome were in terrible danger of assimilation.

They needed some kind of strengthening, both their faith and especially their willingness to sacrifice themselves for their faith. That was the purpose of Todos ish Romi. And the symbol by which he taught willingness to sacrifice oneself for faith was the korban Pesach. His great strength lay in his inspiration, and the chief inspiration was Hananiah Mishael and Azaria who had shown our people the way to self-sacrifice, like Abraham of old. The sages who opposed him agreed with his purpose, merely disagreeing with his method.

In fact, Rabban Gameliel of Yavne, after the destruction of the Temple, attempted to do the same thing that Todos did. Hinhig laasot gedi mekulas beleyley Pesachim – (Betza, 22b). See also Hagahot Rashash to Pesachim 74a) – Zecher lemikdash, shekatuv bo al keraav veal kirbo (Rashi).

The sages disagreed with him too – and for the same reason. Why did he seek to do this? For the same motive of Todos ish Romi; to teach the people Kiddush Hashem, courage, fortitude, mesirat nefesh. He knew that the sages had chided Todos and rejected his method, requiring him to inspire with other lessons, since it appeared as if kodshim bahutz were being offered. But he reasoned that this might apply only while the Temple stood. Now that the Temple was destroyed, people would realize that he was not actually offering a korban but rather teaching a lesson that was sorely needed. The people had been demoralized by the destruction of the Temple, the desolation of the Land, and the rule of Rome with all its idolatry. The Shekalim which had been offered uninterruptedly since the time of Koresh's decree that Jews could return from Babylonia, and which had continued even after the destruction of the Temple, could no longer be offered, and in fact the Romans required that they be offered to one of their pagan gods, Jupiter. Rabban Gameliel deeply felt that the people desperately needed the lesson of pride and mesirat nefesh that was the essence of the korban Pesach.

While he too was stopped from going so far as to use the korban Pesach as the tool of his education and music to the people, he and his colleagues used other methods instead. The lesson of these sages, of mesirat nefesh, was taught well during the subsequent generations and for all time... They stressed that the way to mesirat nefesh is through constant daily disciplines, not only by means of occasional performances like the korban Pesach would be.

When Rabbi Akiva was martyred, he declared that all his life he was wondering how he could serve Hashem with all his heart, with his very life, until now the time had come.... The disciplines he practiced all his life led to the supreme sacrifice he was called upon to make.

This discipline was symbolized in the ceremony of the korban Pesach by the requirement that veetzem lo tishberu bo.

Every age has its challenges. We in America know the many challenges before us, creating loyalty and developing learning etc. And today a particular challenge of demonstrating united loyalty to Israel. Particularly and especially demonstrate to visit Israel now, a challenge of mesirat nefesh which American Jews in particular can meet. May we all merit, through our mesirat nefesh, the geula viyeshua we so desperately need, the binyan Beth Hamikdash bimhera beyamenu

<http://mishpacha.com/Browse/Article/7570/Broken-Matzos-Whole-People>
Broken Matzos, Whole People

Rabbi Efrem Goldberg

The ability to adjust our expectations is freedom

Wednesday, March 29, 2017

According to the 2013 Pew Survey of US Jews, while only 23 percent of American Jews said that they attend religious services at least monthly, 70 percent reported that they participate in a Seder on Passover. More than any other holiday, Pesach brings family together, as they hope to spend quality time that will yield only the most positive memories. In reality, however, it can be difficult to sit in cramped quarters for numerous meals that go on for hours without some conflict, competition, or quarrels arising. As they say, the definition of a dysfunctional family is any family with more than one member.

An unusual custom regarding matzah is very instructive as to how to prepare for a family Pesach together. The holiday of Pesach, and the Seder in particular, are brought to us by the number four: four questions, four sons, four cups of wine. And yet, when it comes to matzah, we have three. Why?

Many explanations have been offered:

A halachic explanation is that we need to have lechem mishneh, two full matzos, just as we have two chollos every week. Since we plan on breaking one at Yachatz, rendering it ineligible for lechem mishneh, we need to begin with three.

The matzos commemorate the three measures of fine flour that Avraham instructed Sarah to bake into matzah when the three angels visited them, which, as Rashi points out, occurred on Pesach.

The Magen Avraham suggests that the three matzos represent Moshe, Aharon, and the Jewish People. Others suggest that they correspond to chochmah, binah, and daas; Kohein, Levi and Yisrael; and Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov.

In truth, however, while we take it for granted that there are three matzos, Minhagei Yisrael references a fascinating custom: In the 17th century, the practice was to have four matzos at the Seder, not three. Rav Yaakov Reischer was a dayan in Prague before being called to the rabbinate, first in Galicia, then in Worms. In his work Chok Yaakov, he mentions that the custom in his community was to bake four matzos, in order to have a spare. His commentary, published in 1696, indicates that this was already the prevalent custom in Eastern Europe. In addition, there are mentions of the custom to bake four matzos in the 18th century in England.

This custom was opposed by great halachic authorities, not because they didn't like the idea, but for a technical reason. They felt the more matzos

they had to bake, the more dough was necessary, and the more dough necessary, the greater the chance of it becoming chometz. So, in the end, we only have three matzos. But I believe the symbolism of the fourth is very meaningful for us as well.

Why have the fourth matzah? It was called the matzas safek, serving as a reserve in case one of the others broke. But that explanation raises questions as well. Certainly, matzos are delicate, but so is the pitom of an esrog, and yet we don't find a custom to have an extra esrog handy. We don't have a spare shofar, or a backup menorah. Why the need for a backup, reserve matzah?

Studies show that depression and anxiety spike during holiday time. "A lot of times it's the disconnect for many people between what is supposed to be a really warm family gathering, and what it's really like for some families," explains Dr. John Oldham, chief of staff, and senior vice president of The Menninger Clinic in Houston.

Shofar, esrog, the menorah, etc., can all be accomplished and fulfilled on one's own. There is no dialogue, no relationship, and no interaction involved with those mitzvos. The Seder, in stark contrast, is characterized by haggadah — a dialogue and conversation. Pesach above all other holidays brings people together. "How many people are you having for Yom Tov?" or "How many are joining you for the Seder?" are common questions this time of year.

We bring high expectations to our holiday reunion. This year will be great, we think to ourselves. Everyone will get along. I won't have to compete for attention. The kids will be enraptured by the Seder and not distracted. Nothing will spill.

Perhaps the custom of a fourth matzah originated because we must understand that matzah is going to break. The Torah does not deal only with utopian lives; it is designed to inspire and enrich our imperfect lives.

Though we may no longer practice baking a matzas safek, the message in having a fourth matzah handy is to adjust your expectations and set yourself free. Maintaining hope for a perfect experience, relationship, or holiday is exhausting and burdensome. Understanding at the outset that things will go wrong and that we will encounter bumps along the road is liberating and cathartic.

Part of the Seder, the order of life, is preparing for the broken pieces. A chassan and kallah stand underneath the chuppah, and the ceremony concludes with breaking a glass. It is critical, before they even take leave of this most auspicious and special moment, that the young man and woman realize that things will break, obstacles will be encountered, and that this is okay. We can't control other people and we can't control all events and circumstances. We can only control our expectations and, more importantly, how we respond to them. That ability to control and adjust our expectations is freedom.

May our lives and our matzos remain whole. But if a matzah — or anything else — does break, don't allow yourself to break along with it. (Originally featured in Mishpacha, Issue 654)

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Loss of Hope Is Loss of Everything – Rabbi Meir Zlotowitz

"Four Sons" are one of the highlights of the Haggadah. The Torah's emphasis on four different types of personalities, with varied abilities and interests, demonstrates that just as the Torah speaks to the full spectrum of Jews, so must we tailor our teaching and conduct to all kinds of people and children. The so-called rasha, or "wicked son," is usually portrayed in word and illustration as an incorrigibly bad person, whom we rebuke and distance from our community. This attitude is belied by the Scriptural context of the "wicked son's" declaration. In Exodus Chapter 12, Moses instructed Israel about their forthcoming pesach offering and their liberation from Egypt. He told them that when we will celebrate Pesach in Eretz

Yisrael, Your children will say to you, "What is this service to you?" (Exodus 12:26). As the Haggadah explains, this is the question of the wicked son, who separates himself from us and does not wish to share in our observance of the commandments. Surprisingly, the Torah continues that the people bowed their heads and prostrated themselves (12:27). Rashi explains that they prostrated themselves before God in joyous gratitude for Moses' assurance that they would have children! Were they overjoyed that they would have wicked children who would proclaim that they want no part of the Jewish community? Is that what parents pray for? The Chassidic master of Kobrin gave a beautiful interpretation of the Haggadah's dialogue between the wicked son and his frustrated parent. It is an insight that speaks to every family and every educator. This son is "wicked" only in the sense that he has given up on himself. He has not succeeded scholastically or socially. Perhaps his marriage is floundering. He can't support his family. He attends the synagogue and study groups, but is not inspired. He wants and tries to improve, but never seems to succeed. In his agony, he tells his family and friends that he has given up. He no longer belongs in the community. He has failed the test of belonging. Nothing succeeds, so why keep trying?

Great rabbis have said that the worst word in the Hebrew language is ye'ush, loss of hope. The so-called wicked son is resigning himself to a life of wickedness only because he is convinced that he deserves no better. To this declaration of despair, the Haggadah answers, "If our ancestors in Egypt had had such an attitude, none of them would have been redeemed!" As our Sages tell us, the Jews in Egypt were barely distinguishable from their Egyptian masters. They, too, worshiped idols. They had fallen to the forty-ninth level of impurity, just a step from the irredeemable abyss. Why were they saved? Because they had a powerful desire to lift themselves — and because of that God lifted them out of Egyptian decadence and immorality. They made themselves worthy to receive the Torah at Mount Sinai only seven weeks after the Exodus.

This is the Haggadah's message to the son who thinks there is no way out of his hopelessness. There is always a way. Only despair stands in the way.

The very first commandment to Israel as a nation was that of the New Moon. That commandment symbolizes the Jewish nation and the individual Jew. Our history is one of renewal. There have been countless times in countless countries when eulogies were written for traditional Judaism and for allegiance to Torah study and Torah life. But always there was a renewal of Jewish life, sometimes in the same country, often in another country or continent. These phenomena are so familiar that we forget that they are truly miraculous.

The structure of the Haggadah teaches us to be confident that there is always a bright future. The narrative section of the Haggadah follows the rule that we begin by speaking of Israel's shameful past and conclude with praise. Regarding what is shameful in our history, there are two opinions in the Talmud. One Sage holds that it is our enslavement in Egypt. The other Sage holds it is our origin from idol-worshipping ancestors. The Haggadah incorporates both opinions. The Exodus from Egypt wiped away both stains. No longer will we be a nation of idolaters. And never again will we be slaves in the true sense of the word. Bodies can be enslaved — as has happened to us over the centuries — but true slavery is in the mind. The Jewish soul owes allegiance only to God, and that will never change.

Recent history confirms all of the above. There have been "wicked sons" who despaired of their Jewishness and never heard the lullaby of our great-grandmother: *Toirah iz di beste s'choirah*, Torah study is the best investment. There have been Jews who succumbed to foreign beliefs and dedicated themselves to foreign masters. But the world is filled with individuals and communities that have discovered the beauty of Torah. Not for many generations has there been such a thirst for authentic Torah knowledge. Yeshivah and day school populations are surging. Talmud and other classes have become obligatory in places where they never existed.

Rabbi Yisroel Reisman - Thoughts on the Shiras Hayam 5770

This Vort is a thought on Shevii Shel Pesach that just passed and we should take it with us to the Davening of the rest of the year. The Shira of Az Yashir is the most famous Shira in the Torah. There are two questions. The Shira is Lashoin Nekaiva as opposed to Shir. We find in Tehillim sometimes Shira Chadasha and sometimes Shir Chadash. The Meforshim on Tehillim say this has to do with a Medrash on Parshas Beshalach that the difference is that Shira Chadasha is a Shir B'oilam Hazeh and when we talk about the days of Mashiach, we say Shir Chadash, like in Kabbalas Shabbos, Tehillim 98:1. A Shir is a higher form of Shir than a Shira.

Why is Az Yashir which should be higher form of song a Shira, let it be a Shir the higher form? The Ababernel in the beginning of the 5th Perek in Yeshaya has an extraordinary Arichus of the idea of songs. When he talks about songs in Tanach he says, there is a level of song such as the Shiras Hayam and what was special about it was the music and the tune which they sang. He says there is a higher level. Shir Hashirim which are poetic expressions which open up the heart, they don't need song, and that is why Shir Hashirim is the higher level.

So again, why is the Shiras Hayam a lower level of Shira and Shir Hashirim a higher level? Shouldn't Moshe Rabbeinu's song be on a higher level? The Chasam Soifer has an insight into the Shira. He says that when Klal Yisrael left Mitzrayim they were still called Halalu Oivdai Avida Zorah. Certainly they believed in Hashem. There was a Shitta in Mitzrayim that it is true that Hashem created the world; however, there is no Hashgacha Protis, he doesn't watch the world, he moved on and this world runs on its on. That was a big Yetizer Hora for Klal Yisrael. Anyone who is having difficulties has a big Yetizer Hora that Hashem doesn't watch every step or else how does he let this happen. Klal Yisrael being oppressed in Mitzrayim for generations had this Halalu Oivdei Avida Zorah and had this question if Hashem really cares about everything that happens. When Mitzrayim was running (Roidim) after them, it was not only referring to the people of Mitzrayim but also to the Shitta of Mitzrayim. There was Taiva to say look what the Egyptians did to us and it was such a long period of time, so is these really Hashgacha Protis.

At the Yam Suf, there was a tremendous Middah K'negged Middah with the punishment at the Yam Suf. This is mentioned in numerous places of the Mitzriyim drowning Jewish children and the Middah K'negged Middah of the drowning of the Mitzriyim. The precise Middah K'negged Middah at the Yam Suf was to drive away this Yetizer Hora and to understand that through times of difficulties and times of Tzaros there is still Hashgacha Protis. Hashem is always keeping count even though we don't know his Cheshbanois. This is the song of Shira Chadasha.

With this we understand that it is not the ultimate Shira or the Shir of L'asid Lavo and the Shiras Hayam is for Oilam Hazeh. The 2 expressions of praise in the Shira are Mi Chamoicha Ba'a'ilim Hashem (who is like you Hashem, who knows how to be silent when he has to be silent) and the other expression of Hashem Yimloich L'oilam Va'ed which expresses Hashem's Malchus at all times.

This is important to have a new insight into a part of Davening. In Birchash Kriyas Shema after we are Mekabail Oil Malchus Shamayim, we say a Beracha of Go'al Yisrael. We say a Beracha that discusses Hashem Koiach Hageulah. In there you should notice that we talk about Kriyas Yam Suf. In Shacharis we say (Emes) Mimitzrayim G'altanu Hashem Eloikeinu, Umibais Avinu Pidisanu. Kol B'choirai'hem Haragta, Uv'charcha Ga'alta, V'Yam Suf Bakata... we talk about the Yam Suf, we talk about the Shira. Both by Shacharis and Arvis after Kaballas Oil Malchus Shamayim, we remember the recognition that we had at the Yam Suf. The Chazzan even interrupts the Beracha to say out loud with the Tzibbur Mi Chamoicha Ba'a'ilim Hashem and Hashem Yimloich L'oilam Va'ed. Those are two Pesukim of Shiras Hayam. (We most probably don't even recognize what we are saying because we are so used to saying it.) However, both in Shacharis and in Arvis we say those Pesukim together to once again express our Emunah in the lesson of

the Shiras Hayam. This is a tremendous insight of the Chasam Soifer and something to take with us after Pesach.

THE HAGGADAH OF THE ROSHEI YESHIVAH Vol 2

מגיד / Maggid

Remembering the Exodus on Pesach night

One of the mitzvos of the Torah is to "recall the day you went out of Egypt all the days of your life" (Devarim 16:3). This mitzvah obligates us to mention the Exodus once each day and again at night, as the Mishnah (Berachos 12b, quoted later in the Haggadah) explains. (We fulfill this obligation today by reading the Torah portion that deals with *tzitzis* — which ends off with "I am Hashem. . . Who took you out of the land of Egypt. . ." — as part of the twice-daily recitation of the *Shema*.) This being the case, the question has been asked: Why does the Torah issue a new commandment (*Shemos* 13:8) to retell the story of the Exodus on Pesach night, at the Seder? What does this new mitzvah entail that would not have already been covered by the regular, nightly mitzvah?

R' Chaim Soloveitchik explained that there are in fact three major differences between the routine mentioning of the Exodus nightly and the retelling of the story of the Exodus on Pesach night.

1. The daily mitzvah can be fulfilled even by making mention of the Exodus in private. The Pesach mitzvah, however, must be accomplished through a dialogue, in a question-and-answer format, as the Torah states (ibid., 13:14): "When your son will ask you at some future time, 'What is this?' you shall say to him, 'With a strong hand Hashem removed us from Egypt from the house of bondage.'" This requirement is implemented at the Seder when the child asks, "Why is this night different, etc." and the leader answers, "We were slaves, etc." Even when it is not possible to have two or more people at a Seder, the lone participant must "ask" himself the four questions and give the answers, as the Gemara stipulates (*Pesachim* 116a).

2. The requirement for retelling the Exodus story on Pesach night is that it be told by first describing the initial indignity of Israel before the Exodus, and then proceeding to discuss their subsequent prestige after leaving Egypt (ibid.). There is no such requirement for the daily mitzvah of remembering the Exodus.

3. The mitzvah of retelling the Exodus story on Pesach night must be done through a discussion of the rationales behind the three foods that we are commanded to consume on this night — matzah, *maror*, and the meat of the Pesach sacrifice (ibid.). This is not the case, of course, for the regular, daily mitzvah.

These three components of the mitzvah of retelling the Exodus story are codified into halachah by the Rambam (Hil. Chometz U'matzah, Chap. 7).

Had not the Holy One, Blessed is He, taken our fathers out from Egypt, then we . . . and our children's children would have remained enslaved to Pharaoh in Egypt

Spiritual freedom

This does not mean that if not for the miraculous Exodus from Egypt 3500 years ago we would still be physically situated in Egypt today, enslaved to the Egyptians as in ancient days. History marches on, and there have been many changes of government and population in Egypt over the millennia. It is almost certain that in one way or another, through natural shifts in historical and sociological factors, our ancestors would have been released from bondage to the Egyptian people long ago. What this declaration does mean, however, explains R' Velvel Soloveitchik, is that we must realize that the main goal of the Exodus was not merely emancipation from slavery, but our evolution into the servants of Hashem. Thus, even if the Jewish people had eventually become liberated through some natural process, they would not have undergone the enormous spiritual transformation that took place as a result of the Exodus, and they would have always remained on the same dismal spiritual plane that they had been when they were *enslaved to Pharaoh in Egypt*.

In light of these words of R' Velvel, we can gain a new insight into the Sages' exhortation that *In every generation it is one's duty to regard himself as though he personally had gone out from Egypt*. It is not enough to imagine oneself as if he had personally experienced liberation from physical bondage; he must see himself as someone who has personally undergone the spiritual transformation into becoming a servant of God, for it was the spiritual component of the Exodus that was the main objective of this event, not the physical and political aspects.

“on that day” could be understood to mean only during the daytime; therefore the Torah adds ...

The timing of the mitzvah

In its attempt to establish the exact time frame for the fulfillment of the mitzvah of recounting the story of the Exodus, the Haggadah considers the possibility that the time for the mitzvah may begin during the day of the fourteenth of Nisan. This is a very strange possibility to consider, if we bear in mind the context of the verse in question:

Moshe said to the people: Remember *this day* on which you departed from Egypt (that is, Nisan 15). . . . And when Hashem shall bring you to the land of the Canaanites. . . . you shall perform this service in this month. For a seven-day period you shall eat matzos. . . . And you shall tell your son on *that day*, saying: It is because of this that Hashem acted on my behalf when I left Egypt.

The Torah clearly delineates when the telling of one's son should be performed — on *that day*, that is, on the day mentioned earlier in the paragraph, the fifteenth of Nisan.

R' Velvel Soloveitchik suggested an answer to this question based on the words of *Tosafos* on *Pesachim* 99b. *Tosafos*, basing himself on the words of the Mishnah, asserts that although normally one may begin his observance of Shabbos or *Yom Tov* well before nightfall, and he may eat his festive meal while it is still daylight, on *Pesach* one may not do so, as the mitzvos of matzah and *maror* cannot be performed until nighttime. The reason for this, *Tosafos* explains, is that these foods are associated by the Torah with the meat of the *pesach* sacrifice, about which it is written: “They shall eat the meat on this night” (*Exodus* 12:8). This reasoning applies to the eating of matzah and *maror*, R' Velvel explained, but there is no reason to assume that the other mitzvah of *Pesach* evening — recounting the story of the Exodus — cannot be performed in the late afternoon of the day before *Pesach*, if one chooses to begin his observance of the *Pesach Yom Tov* earlier than required. The Haggadah considered this possibility to be quite reasonable, and had to dispel this notion by inferring from the words *Because of this* that the “telling” must be done at the same time as the performance of the mitzvos of matzah and *maror* — after nightfall.

In this connection, R' Velvel dealt with a related question: We have shown that the four Torah mitzvos of the night — eating matzah, *maror*, and *pesach*, and retelling the story of the Exodus — cannot be fulfilled before nightfall. What would the law be concerning the four cups that the Sages ordained to be drunk at the Seder? Can this observance (or at least the first cup, *Kiddush*) be carried out before nightfall, just as an early *Kiddush* is permitted on Shabbos and other *Yamim Tovim*? There does not seem to be any indication to prohibit this, as the four cups, unlike matzah and *maror*, are not associated with the *Pesach* meat. R' Velvel concluded that since the four cups were instituted as an expression of leisure and liberty, it is not possible to fulfill this obligation except during the time that commemorates that liberty — the fifteenth of Nisan, which begins after the nightfall of the fourteenth. (The *Shulchan Aruch* [472:1] also rules that *Kiddush* may not be recited until after dark.)

“You shall tell your son” applies only when matzah and maror lie before you

Keeping matzah and maror on the table

Does this statement mean only that the *time frame* for “telling your son” is to be identified with the time frame for matzah and *maror* (i.e., nighttime), or is it meant to be taken more literally, that matzah and *maror* must actually be present at the time of the recounting of the story of the Exodus? For example, if a person recites the Haggadah at night, but neglected to have the matzah and *maror* displayed before him during the recitation, has he fulfilled the mitzvah?

R' Velvel Soloveitchik believed that the more literal interpretation was the correct one, and he brought several proofs for this view.

The Gemara (*Pesachim* 36a) discusses the meaning of the term *לֶחֶם עֲנִי* (usually translated as *bread of affliction*), by which the Torah (*Devarim* 16:3) describes matzah. One of the interpretations given is that it is called this because it is “bread over which many words are spoken (עֲנִי).” This would seem to indicate that the matzah is actually present at the time the discussion of the Exodus takes place.

At the end of *Pesachim*, the *Tosefta* tells a story about Rabban Gamliel and the other Sages who gathered together for a Seder in the town of Lod. They spent the

entire night discussing the laws of *Pesach*, and when the morning arrived “it was lifted up from before them” and they went together to the synagogue (for the morning prayer). What is meant by the mysterious statement, “it was lifted up from before them”? What was lifted up, and why? R' Velvel explained that the Seder plate, with matzah and *maror* upon it, had been left on the table around which the all-night discussion took place. When the discussion ended, these symbols were no longer necessary, and they were removed, or “lifted up,” from the table.

R' Velvel thought it surprising, however, that the requirement to “have matzah and *maror* before you” could continue to be met even after one has finished the eating of these foods. It would have been more logical to understand the requirement for the presence of these foods during the discussion to be in preparation for eating them; their presence after this point seems to be somewhat irrelevant. For this reason he expressed his reservations about his suggested interpretation of the strange expression, “it was lifted up from before them.” His son, R' David, however, adduced a proof that the display of (leftover) matzah and *maror* is indeed appropriate even after one has partaken of these foods. Commenting on the Gemara's words (mentioned above), *bread over which many words are spoken*, Rashi explains what these *many words* are: “The *Hallel* is completed over it, and the Haggadah is recited over it.” The *Hallel* is begun before the meal, but it is not completed until after the meal — and the matzah and *maror* — have already been eaten! Thus, we see that the presence of the matzah is called for even after the mitzvah to eat it has been concluded.

In every generation it is one's duty to regard himself as though he personally had gone out of Egypt . . . Therefore, it is our duty to thank . . .

A personal miracle

At first glance, these two paragraphs do not seem to be related to each other. Why does the second paragraph begin with *Therefore*, which implies a cause-and-effect relationship?

The explanation for this, R' Velvel Soloveitchik wrote, may be understood through noting the words of the *Geonim*, quoted by the *Ran* in his commentary on *Pesachim*. There the principle is established that there are two distinct kinds of *Hallel* that may be said. One is the *Hallel* of recitation, recited in honor of holidays (*Yom Tov*, *Chol Hamo'ed*, *Chanukah*). The other kind of *Hallel* is the *Hallel* of song (an emotional outbreak of praise), which is recited when the Jewish nation (or perhaps even an individual) experiences a miraculous act of salvation. The *Hallel* recited at the Seder, assert the *Geonim*, is of the second type, the *Hallel* of song and joy. This, they explain, is why, unlike any other *Hallel* recited during the year, this *Hallel* is not preceded with a blessing (“Blessed are You. . . Who commanded us to recite the *Hallel*”).

The *Hallel* of song, R' Velvel explained, can only be said by a person who has himself experienced God's salvation. If he had only witnessed or heard about an act of salvation that occurred to another individual, it would not be appropriate for him to sing the praises of God, as moved as he may be.

Now we can understand the progression of ideas in these two paragraphs of the Haggadah. In order to recite the *Hallel*, we must achieve the state of mind of one who has experienced personal delivery from distress. Thus, we take note of the fact that the Torah requires each and every individual, throughout the ages, to consider himself as though he personally had gone out from Egypt. After having arrived at this realization, we proclaim, “Therefore, it is our duty to thank, praise, etc. Him Who performed all these miracles for our fathers and for us. . . . Let us, therefore, recite a new song before Him! Halleluyah!”