

DIVREI TORAH FROM INTERNET
ON PESACH - 5756

B'S'D'

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Pesach 1996 Hebrew Dictionary

The Hagada details the story of our exile in Egypt and our redemption. It bases a large portion of the narration on four verses in Deuteronomy 26:5-9 that summarize the entire episode. The first verse mentions that Lavan the Arami afflicted his son-in-law Yaakov, who eventually sojourned with few in number to the land of Egypt. The next verse begins in an unclear manner by stating that "the Egyptians made evil of us." The Hebrew conjugation that is used for the words "made evil of us" could mean a few different things. It may mean that the Egyptians acted cruelly towards us. It also can be interpreted that the Egyptians made us into bad people by creating a system where Jews became kapos and mistreated Jews. Yet, the Hagada seems to interpret the verse in a third and wholly different light.

The Hagada quotes the verse in Deuteronomy, "the Egyptians made evil of us, and elucidates it by adding, "as it is written: (Exodus 1:11) 'come let us devise a plans against them, lest they will increase, and if a war breaks out they will join our enemies and drive ?usX from the land.'"

How is the verse in Exodus an explanation of the words, "the Egyptians made evil of us"? It seems the Egyptians were worried about the increasing Jewish population. But the verse does not mention that the Egyptians, at that point, actually inflicted any suffering upon the Jews. Nor does the verse prove that the Egyptians affected our own brotherhood and made us evil to each other. That also happened during the later stages of our exile. How,

then, does the Hagada understand the words in Deuteronomy, "the Egyptians made evil of us?" And how is the fear of insurrection a proof of the Hagada's interpretation of the words, "the Egyptians made evil of us"?

About two years ago, Peter Kash, a young venture capitalist in the field of bio-technology, came across a very demeaning definition of the word Jew in a modern dictionary. "Jew:(joo) Slang (an offensive usage) 1. To persuade to take a lower price by haggling 2. To get the better of in a bargain."

In addition to the conventional definitions, the dictionary also mentioned that the use of the term Jew as a moneylender is obsolete.

Peter was shocked. He set out to change the dictionary. He was informed by a number of major Jewish organizations which half-heartedly sympathized with him, that his effort would be futile unless tens of thousands wrote letters.

He was not deterred. After arduous efforts, he finally got the opportunity to discuss the matter with the editorial director of the publishing firm responsible for Funk & Wagnall's and several Webster dictionaries.

His request fell on deaf ears until he said to the woman, "imagine, you have the opportunity to influence the course of civilization. You can influence beliefs about an entire race by either retaining or deleting the repulsive and asinine definition. Your decision will affect a generation of youngsters who read the dictionary and formulate indelible opinions. And those youngsters may shape the course of history.=20

She needed no further convincing. The abhorrent definition was removed and never appeared again.

The author of the Hagada knew that history has no new ideas. The tactics of the Der Sturmer or the Protocols of the Elders of Zion were not devised in this century. They began in Egypt. The Hagada interprets the verse, " the Egyptians made evil of us" to mean that they slandered us. They claimed we were not loyal citizens and would become a fifth column during a war. Oppression begins with character assassination. The rest is child's play. No matter who we are, we must remember that on every level -- from individuals to entire nations -- words destroy.

May Hashem let our light unto the nations shine clearly, as our actions represent all that is dear to the Torah.

Have a Happy and Healthy and, of course, Kosher Passover.
Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

Dedicated by Dr. & Mrs. Yashar Hirshaut in memory of Tzvi ben Avraham and in honor of the birth of a grandson Yehoshua Zvi Betzalel to our children Akiva & Aviva Lubin

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""Yeshivat Har Etzion" <yhe@jer1.co.il> " Chumash shiur...
Subject: HAGGADAH By Menachem Leibtag

SHABBAT HA'GADOL For Shabbat Ha'Gadol, I am re-sending a short shiur which I sent out last year, dealing with topics related to the Haggadah.

TOPIC I. - DAYYENU

How can a Jew say, let alone sing, that -"it would have been enough"- even had we not received the Torah or Eretz Yisrael? Yet, every year at the Pesach seder this is the perplexing message we seemingly proclaim as we sing "Dayyenu."

The answer is really quite simple. Within its context in the Haggadah, the "piyut" (poem) of "Dayyenu" not only summarizes the story of Yetziat Mitzraim, it also INTRODUCES HALLEL. Therefore, "Dayyenu" should be translated: 'it would have been enough TO SAY HALLEL FOR..' In this "piyut" we declare that each single act of God's kindness in that redemption process 'would have been enough' to obligate us to praise Him, i.e. to recite the Hallel.

In the Haggadah, we recite "Dayyenu" at the conclusion of maggid, prior to mentioning "pesach, matzah, and maror" (Raban Gamliel...) and reciting of the Hallel. Mentioning these three mitzvot adjacent to the Hallel parallels the requirement to sing Hallel while eating the korban pesach during the time of the Temple. Thus, "Dayyenu" serves in the Haggadah as an introduction to the Hallel:

- Had Hashem only taken us out of Egypt and not punished the Egyptians, that "would have been enough" to obligate us to say Hallel.

- Had he split the sea for us but not given us the 'mahn', this alone would have been sufficient reason to praise God.... And so on.

"Dayyenu" relates a total of fifteen acts of divine kindness, each act alone worthy of praise. Therefore, the Haggadah continues, "al achat kamah vekhamah," how much more so is it proper to thank God for performing ALL these acts of kindness. Thus, in the Haggadah, "Dayyenu" provides the proper perspective, and creates the appropriate atmosphere for the recitation of the Hallel.

When we recite the Hallel at the seder, we do so not only out of gratitude for Hashem's taking us out of Egypt, but also in appreciation of each stage of the redemptive process. As the "Dayyenu" emphasizes, we thank God not only for the exodus, but also for the 'mahn', for shabbat, for coming close to Har Sinai, for the Torah, for the Land of Israel..., and finally for the building of the Bet HaMikdash.

Based on this understanding, the "Dayyenu" contains an underlying, profound hashkafah, a message very applicable to our own generation. Today, there are those who focus only on the first stanza of "Dayyenu," viewing freedom as the final goal, the ultimate redemption. For them, the first stanza of "Dayyenu" - the exodus - is "enough." Others focus only upon the last stanza, that without the realization of the idyllic goal of building the Mikdash, the entire redemptive process is meaningless. In their eyes, Hallel should be sung only when the redemption reaches its ultimate goal. "Dayyenu" disagrees - each stage of the process requires Hallel.

It is this hashkafic message, i.e., the understanding and appreciation of each step of the redemptive process, which

"Dayyenu" teaches us. Ge'ulat Yisra'el - the redemption of Israel - is a process which is comprised of many stages. Every significant step in this process, even without the full attainment of the ultimate goal, requires our gratitude and praise to Hashem. In each stage of redemption, 'Am Yisra'el is required to recognize that stage and thank Hashem accordingly, while at the same time recognizing that many more stages remain yet unfulfilled.

"Dayyenu" challenges us to find the proper balance.

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TOPIC II. - THE FOUR SONS [K'NEGEGED ARBA BANIM...]

Everyone is familiar with the Midrash of "The Four Sons" in the Hagaddah, yet because we are less familiar with the parshiot in Chumash quoted by that Midrash, its deeper message is often overlooked. The following shiur is a classic example of the necessity of learning "pschat" to appreciate "drash". [The Midrash of the four sons quoted in the Hagaddah is actually a Mechilta, and a Yerushalmi - See Haggadah Shlayma by Rav Kasher for m'korot.]

The Midrash begins:

"Kenege'd arba'ah banim dibberah Torah" :

- 1) echad chacham - the wise son;
- 2) ve'echad rasha - the wicked son;
- 3) echad tam - the simple son;
- 4) ve'echad she'eino yodea lish'ol

- the son who doesn't know how to ask:

The Midrash continues by quoting a question for each son from the four instances in the Torah when 'the father' answers his son. It is commonly assumed when reading this Midrash that these four questions quoted from Chumash all pertain to 'pesach'. Considering that all four questions deal with the same topic, one 'question and answer' should suffice. The Torah, however, provides four different versions of 'questions and answers' concerning 'pesach'. Presumably, the Midrash explains that these four versions in Chumash are necessary to answer the questions of four different personalities of sons.

Thus, the Torah supplies us with four 'prepared' answers to give our children. A father, when confronted with a question regarding pesach, needs merely to open the Chumash and choose the appropriate answer for his particular son.

If we examine this Midrash more carefully and look up the psukim that it quotes, it becomes obvious that this assumption is totally incorrect!

To our surprise, when we compare the answers given by the Haggadah to these four questions, to the answers provided in Chumash, we find many discrepancies.

The following table compares the answers to the four questions given by the Haggadah, to the answers given in Chumash:

QUESTION: *chacham*

"Mah ha'edot vehachukkim vehamishpatim asher tzivah Hashem Elokeinu etchem" ?

TORAH - "Avadim ha'yinu l'pharoh b'mitzraim" (Dvarim 6:21)
Haggadah - " Ve'af attah emor lo khilchot hapesach,

"Ein maftirim achar hapesach afikoman."

QUESTION: *rasha*

"Mah ha'avodah hazot lachem?"

TORAH - "v'amar'tem zevach pesach hu l'Hashem asher pa'sach al batei bnei Yisrael b'Mitzraim..." (Shmot 12:27)
 Haggadah - Lachem, velo lo. Ulefi shehotzi et atzmo min hakelal, kafar be'ikkar. Ve'af attah hacheh et shinnav ve'emor lo, "Ba'avur zeh asah Hashem li betzeiti m'Mitzraim" - LI, velo LO ; ilu hayah sham lo hayah nig'al.

QUESTION: *tam*
 " Mah zot?"

TORAH - "Bechozek yad hotzi'anu Hashem m'Mitzrayim m'beit avadim. V'yhi ki hiyksha Pharoh l'shalcheinu -va'yaharog kol bchor b'eretz Mitzraim, m'bchor adam ad bchor b'haymah al kein ani zovayach l'Hashem kol peter rechem ha'zcharim." (Shmot 13:15)

Haggadah - "Bechozek yad hotzi'anu Hashem m'Mitzraim mibeit avadim." [and nothing more!]

QUESTION: *she'eino yodea lish'ol*
 ---- (no question - only an answer)

TORAH - "Vehiggadta livincha bayom hahu lemor, 'Ba'avur zeh asah Hashem li betzeiti mimitzrayim.'" (Shmot 13:8)

Haggadah - the same

Clearly, the Haggadah does not provide the same answers as the Torah does. Is the Midrash totally unaware of these answers?

Furthermore, if examine these four questions in Chumash, and study their context, we do indeed find four questions, however, each question does not relate to a DIFFERENT SON. Rather, each question relates to a different TOPIC!

The following table lists the four instances in Chumash where the father answers his son. Note that each question, although related in one form or other to Yetziat Mitzraim, deals with a unique topic:

- | SOURCE | CONTEXT | SON | TOPIC |
|---|---------|-----|---------------------------|
| 1. Shmot 12:26, read 12:21-28 /("rasha") | | | - Korban PESACH. |
| 2. Shmot 13:8, read 13:3-10 /("aino yodeyah") | | | - Chag HaMATZOT. |
| 3. Shmot 13:14, read 13:11-16 /("tam") | | | - Ke'dushat BCHOR. |
| 4. Dvarim 6:20, read 6:1-25 /("chacham") | | | - ALL MITZVOT of Chumash! |

[I recommend that you look up each of the above psukim and discern the context of each question within its related parsha.]

Each question seems quite 'legitimate' for any type of son to ask, for each question deals with a SEPARATE TOPIC. According to 'pshat' there is no necessity to relate these four questions to four different types of sons.

Could it be that the Midrash is unaware that each question relates to a different topic?

As is often the case, the Midrash is not coming to teach us "pshat" in Chumash, rather it is 'using' psukim in Chumash to convey a thought; an educational message.

[The Midrash, fully aware of the "pshat", expects the reader to figure out "pshat" on his own.]

In our specific case, the Midrash of the 'Four Sons' is interested in giving over a insight relating to education, a thought that has added significance on "leil HaSeder". The message of the Midrash is valuable not only to a father, but for any educator as well.

When the parent hears the question of a child; when the teacher hears the question of a student; he must listen carefully not to the QUESTION, but also to the PERSON behind the question.

To answer a question properly, the father must not only understand the question, but must also be aware of the motivation behind it. The answer must not only be accurate, but also appropriate. It must relate to his son's character and take into account his spiritual needs.

In an clever style, the Midrash 'borrows' the four questions mentioned in Chumash when a father answers his son, to teach this message. The Midrash uses these questions to offer four examples of how to 'read between the lines' of a question in order to discern the character of the son who is asking.

When confronted with a question, the father is not expected to simply use Chumash as a resource book to look up the correct answer. Rather, he must listen carefully to the voice behind the question, evaluate and answer appropriately. When necessary he can even innovate, as the Midrash does, and substitute his own answer.

This message conveyed by the Midrash of 'the Four Sons' in the Haggadah is the responsibility of every parent and the challenge of every teacher. Understanding it correctly is the essence of "leil ha'Seder", for it enables us to pass down our tradition from father to son; our heritage from generation to generation.

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TOPIC III. - FROM MATZA TO CHAMETZ
 [based on a class by R. Yoel Bin-Nun/ summarized by Shalom Holtz]

Matzah by its very nature is lechem oni, bread of poverty. A poor person does not have the time nor the proper utensils necessary to bake chametz. The Israelites are commanded to eat matzot and maror, together with the korban Pesach, in order to remember the poverty and slavery they experienced in Egypt. Just as the matzah has symbolized the Israelites' plight in Egypt, chametz would be an appropriate symbol of their newly-obtained freedom and prosperity, for chametz is the food of the wealthy. It would seem appropriate, then, that with the redemption from Egypt would come a commandment to eat chametz.

However, the instructions for the days which commemorate the period immediately following the exodus command exactly the opposite: not only a ban on chametz, but also a commandment to eat matzah. "Throughout the seven days unleavened bread shall be eaten; no leavened bread shall be found with you, and no leaven shall be found in your territory." (Shemot 13:7). What, then, is behind issur chametz and mitzvot akhilat matzah?

Chametz and matzah in these commandments serve as symbols based on their physical characteristics. The key difference between chametz and matzah lies in how sophisticated the wheat has become through production. Chametz is wheat in its most complex form. It is the goal of the wheat grower and the final stage to which the wheat-growing process can be taken. Matzah, on the other hand, is bread in its most basic form, at the beginning of the bread-baking process.

The purpose of matzah during the seven days of Pesach is to represent the beginning of a process. After the night of the korban Pesach, the Israelites are not fully redeemed. Matzah, bread at the beginning of its production, serves as a reminder that the exodus is just the beginning of a journey.

The process which begins at the exodus culminates in two other major events: the giving of the Torah and the entrance

into the land of Canaan. The mitzvah of bikkurim, the offering of the first-grown fruits, commemorates both of these events in Am Yisrael's history. The holiday marking the beginning of the harvest of the wheat crop, Shavuot, falls out on the same date as the giving of the Torah, the sixth of Sivan. A major component of the ceremony of the offering of the bikkurim, which commemorates the arrival in the Holy Land, is mikra bikkurim, the recitation of Devarim 26:5-10. These verses constitute a declaration of thanks for a successful crop grown in the land of Israel.

It is within the mitzvah of bikkurim, which commemorates both conclusions of the redemption process, that a positive commandment regarding chametz is given. The meal-offering brought with the bikkurim, known as minchat shetei halechem, is an offering of two loaves of leavened bread. This sacrifice of chametz on Shavuot represents the completion of the process begun on Pesach, which was symbolized by the matzot.

The Maggid section of the Haggadah is composed, in part, of the recitation of the midrashic interpretation of mikra bikkurim. However, the reading is limited to the first verses, which focus on the history of Am Yisrael:

"My father was a wandering Aramean, and he went down to Egypt and sojourned there, few in number. He became there a great, mighty, and populous nation. The Egyptians dealt ill with us, and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard labor. And we cried out to Hashem, the God of our fathers, and God heard our voice and saw our affliction and our toil and our oppression. And God took us out of Egypt with a strong hand and with an outstretched arm, and with great terror and with wonders." (Devarim 26:5-8)

The last verses, which contain the expressions of thanks: "And He brought us to this place, and He gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. And now, behold, I have brought the first fruit of the land which You, God, have given me." (ibid., 9-10) are not recited on the night of the Seder. The selection of this section of the Torah for Maggid is a reminder of the nature of the Seder night and of Pesach in general. Pesach commemorates the beginning of the process of redemption whose conclusion is symbolized by the bikkurim. On Pesach we remember that the exodus was only a beginning, and to do this we eat matzah. Similarly, we recite only those verses within mikra bikkurim which pertain to the process of redemption. We leave out the verses pertaining to the final arrival in Eretz Yisrael as a reminder that on Pesach, at least, the process has just begun.

"Dovid Green <dmgreen@skynet.net>" Dvar Torah
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Subject: Pesach

We are told that the first Pesach sacrifice was eaten b'chipozon (hastily). In that spirit, being that it is very close to Pesach, and the many responsibilities are upon us, this is also being done hastily. Please forgive me for any misspellings or mistakes which may exist that I did not edit out. Thank you to Reb Yosef Goldstein for this idea to compile some thoughts on Pesach and the Hagada. I hope this will help to make your Pesach sederim more enjoyable and meaningful. Many thanks to the contributors to

this Pesach dvar Torah, and especially Rabbi Moshe Newman who provided me with some beautiful ideas written by the rabbis on the faculty of Yeshivas Ohr Somayach in Jerusalem. Have a wonderful and inspiring Pesach.

Dovid Green Moderator, Dvar Torah Project Genesis

Rabban Gamliel's list of pesach, matzah, and maror does not seem to conform to any logical sequence. If it is to mirror the order of their respective appearances in the seder, it should be matzah, maror, and pesach, since the afikoman, representing the pesach, comes last in the seder sequence. And if it is to parallel the order of the events in Mitzrayim, pesach and matzah are in good order, symbolizing the dam pesach on the night of the makas b'choros and the maaseh of the dough the next morning, respectively. But maror, which symbolizes the bitterness of the shi'bud, should have been first!

It seems to me that the sequence in R' Gamliel's list is because of the following reason. What was being created, for the first time, by Yetzias Mitzrayim? A relationship between Yisrael and Hashem. As such, Yetzias Mitzrayim is the prototype for any relationship being newly forged. Pesach, matzah, u'maror is the formula for the forging of relationships.

1) Pesach is peh-sach (dialogue). The first step in the creation of any relationship, between people, countries, or any other kind of relationship, is dialogue. Each side needs to hear what the other is looking for out of this relationship, and this is accomplished through talks.

2) Matzah -- lechem oni -- humility. The next step is for each side to determine what they can give up of themselves so that the other can have its needs met. No relationship is forged when each party continues to think, "What's in this for me?" The parties must ask themselves, "What can I offer the other?" This requires a certain humility.

3) Maror. In order for a relationship to get off the ground, each party must accept the fact that the beginnings of a new relationship are not always smooth. They must accept the fact that there will likely be some bitterness before the kinks are worked out and the mutual benefits begin to flow. Without this acceptance, the relationship is doomed at the first rocky spot.

Says Rabban Gamaliel, if we have said over the whole sipur yetzias Mitzrayim, but we have failed to learn the formula that it teaches us and that we can apply to all our relationships, we have not fulfilled the purpose of seder night.

Chaim Goldberger, Lowell, Mass.

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As we begin to the Maggid portion of the Seder, the section of the seder where we retell the story of our exodus from Egypt we start with the paragraph: This is the bread of affliction that our forefathers ate in Egypt. Whoever is hungry, let them come and eat with us. Whoever is in need may come and make Pesach with us. This year we are here. However, next year we will be in Jerusalem. This year we are slaves. Next year we will be free.

There are many questions on this portion of the Haggadah. I would like to dwell on just one question. What does the Haggadah seem to repeat the mention of our future redemption at the end of the Paragraph? Is this just flowery language and the Haggadah is truly repetitive?

The Chacham Zvi offers a very original suggestion. We know the Talmud in Rosh Hashonah (11) quotes an argument between Rabbi Eliezer and Rebbi Yehoshua. Rabbi Eliezer says, The Jews were redeemed from Egypt in

Nissan. However the future, ultimate redemption will be in Tishrei. Raabi Yehoshua says, we were redeemed from Egypt in Nissan and the ultimate redemption will also occur in Nissan.

It is also well known that the Jews in Egypt were no longer obligated to work from Rosh Hashona prior to the redemption from Egypt. The "Shibbud" or the severity of the Golus/exile, ended six months before the redemption occurred. It is therefore logical that the same will happen before the ultimate redemption. i.e. At the beginning of the month six months before the Geulah, the redemption, the yoke of Exile will be lifted from us. (The reason that this is a logical assumption is because we look at the redemption from Egypt as the "format" for the ultimate redemption. As the Posuk, the scripture tells us I will show you miracles as have when I redeemed you from Egypt)

Therefore we may say that the author of the Haggada was not sure if Rabbi Eliezer was right of Rabbi Yehoshua. Therefore, the Haggada start off saying, "This year we are here. Next year we will be in Jerusalem." This is assuming Rabbi Yehoshua was correct. If he is correct then since we were not redeemed this Nissan, we hope that NEXT Nissan we will be redeemed, and we will be in Israel. If, however, Rabbi Eliezer is correct and we will be redeemed in Tishrei, then our situation SHOULD have improved, and since we have not seen any change in our situation the we must assume that NEXT Nissan we will see an improvement in our situation and the following Tishrei we will be redeemed. That is what the Haggada means by saying this year we are slaves, BUT NEXT YEAR we will be free.

(NOTE: It should be noted that we hope and pray that Moshiach will come and redeem us as soon as possible. One of our thirteen principals of faith is that we believe that Moshiach will come come at any time to redeem us. We also believe that there are many questions for which we do not yet have answers for. We say that Eliyahu (Elijah the prophet will come and answer those difficult questions for us. He therefore hope everyday that this be the day of Moshiach's arrival. We do not look at the calendar before asking G-D to send Moshiach that day. If Moshiach's coming causes us to question the Talmudic passage quoted above, we believe that Eliyahu will answer it for us. Y.G.)

Chag Kosher Vesomayach, a Happy and Kosher Pesach to all
Yosey Goldstein

Pesach

The Torah calls Pesach "Chag Hamatzos." But we call it "Pesach." Why is this so? Rav Chaim Volozhiner explains as follows:

The word Matzos and the word Mitzvos are spelled exactly the same in Hebrew. Thus "Chag HaMatzos" can be read "Chag HaMitzvos," meaning that by leaving Egypt and receiving the Torah, the Jewish People now have the opportunity to earn great reward by doing the Mitzvos.

Pesach, on the other hand, means Passover: Hashem "passed over" the houses of the Bnei Yisrael. By calling it Pesach, we emphasize the good that Hashem has done for us.

Our Sages teach us not to serve Hashem with an eye to the reward; rather we should serve Him out of a sense of love and gratitude. By calling it Pesach we de-emphasize the reward that each Mitzva brings, and instead focus on the good that Hashem has done for us.

Rabbi Reuven Lauffer

Karpas

The Talmud explains that by beginning the Seder meal in an unusual way, with a vegetable instead of with bread, the children will be curious and ask, "Why are we beginning the meal with a vegetable instead of bread?" Once their curiosity is aroused, they will be more

attentive to the story of the Exodus. Why a vegetable? Just as a vegetable serves as an appetizer, so too the unusual things we do this evening are meant to whet the children's curiosity.

Rabbi Yehuda Albin

The Four Questions

According to the Abarbanel, the son is pointing out a contradiction: On the one hand, we recline like free people and dip our food like aristocrats. But, on the other hand, we eat "bread of affliction" and bitter herbs. Are we celebrating freedom here, or are we commemorating the slavery?

The answer is both!

"We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, and Hashem, our G-d, took us out from there with a strong hand!..." Tonight we experience the transition from slavery to freedom.

Rabbi Dovid Gottlieb

"And if The Holy One,

Blessed be He, had not taken our fathers out of Egypt, we and our children and the children of our children would still be under the domination of Pharaoh in Egypt."

"Kiddush Hashem" -- Sanctifying the Name of Heaven by giving up one's life -- is not a Mitzva that every Jew has the opportunity to fulfill.

And so it was that in Auschwitz a debate arose amongst the religious inmates: What is the correct form of the Bracha for this Mitzva?

"Baruch Atah...L'kadesh Shmo B'rabim" (Blessed are You...Who has commanded us 'to sanctify' His Name in public), or "...Al Kiddush Shmo B'rabim" (...Who has commanded us 'concerning the sanctification' of His Name in public).

The Rabbi was asked, and he answered: For a Mitzva that one can do on someone else's behalf, one says "Al." But for a Mitzva that one can only do oneself, like putting on Tefillin one says "L" -- "L'haniach Tefillin." Since giving up one's life is not something that one can do on someone else's behalf, the correct form of the Bracha is "L'Kadesh Shmo B'rabim."

When a person looks death in the face and is concerned as to the exactitude of the Bracha he will make as he exits this world -- this is someone who can never be enslaved. Once Hashem redeemed us from Egypt, our oppressors may dominate our bodies, but our souls can never again be enslaved.

Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair

The Wicked Son

What does he say? "What does this drudgery mean to you!"

The wicked son's question is a quote from the Torah: "When your children will say to you...what does this drudgery mean to you!" The key to his wickedness lies in the word "say." He doesn't ask a question at all; rather, he "says." Therefore...

You should take the shine out of his teeth and say, "It's for this that Hashem did for me when I left Egypt." "For me and not for him."

The word "him" is in the third person. Since the wicked son's question is rhetorical, it gets no direct response. To whom, then, is the father speaking? To the son who "doesn't know how to ask a question." He, like the wicked son, asks no questions. Therefore, he is in danger of developing into a "wicked son" himself. The father looks at this son and warns him, "for me and not for him...Don't let his sarcastic smirk fool you ... Had he been in Egypt, he would have assimilated into Egyptian society, and would not have been redeemed."

...And the One Who Does Not Know How to Ask

The Chida -- Rabbi Chaim Yosef David Azulai -- in his commentary "Simchat HaRegel" on the Hagadah, explains that there are three ways one can fulfill the Mitzva of the telling of "Yetzias Mitzrayim. Ideally, the story should be told in the form of question and answer. The Talmud derives this from the Torah's description of Matza as "Lechem Oni" -- the bread over which a person answers.

The second level is to tell the story even if nobody asks. This is derived from the verse "and you shall tell your son on that day..." You should tell him, even if he doesn't ask. Thus, the procedure of question and answer is preferable, but not absolutely necessary. (This is a rare example of L'chatchila and B'dieved in a Torah Mitzva.)

The third level is this: Even if a person is alone, he must speak about the going out of Mitzrayim. This is what Rabban Gamliel teaches when he says that one must "say" three particular statements as the bare minimum to fulfill the Mitzva. Thus, there are three possible levels on which to perform the Mitzva of "Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim."

The Chida adds: When introducing the fourth son The Hagadah uses the word "and." This teaches us that even if someone has other sons that fit into the first three categories, he should also pay attention to the one who does not know how to ask. This is an important lesson for those who are tempted to make the Hagadah an intellectual display which goes over the head of the youngest or least knowledgeable.

Rabbi Ephraim Yawitz

And it is This...

"...which has stood for our fathers and for us; for in each and every generation they stand against us to destroy us, and Hakadosh Baruch Hu rescues us from their hand."

Exactly what "This" refers to is not immediately clear. Is it the promise made to Abraham, mentioned previously? Or that "Hakadosh Baruch Hu always rescues us from their hand?"

Here is a third possibility -- a unique insight into the phenomenon of anti-Semitism: This, that "in each and every generation they stand against us to exterminate us" -- This is what has stood for us. Hard as we may try to forget our Jewishness and adopt the ways of our host nation, sooner or later they rise against us, remind us of our uniqueness, and awaken our commitment to Judaism.

Rabbi Shlomo Zweig, in the name of his father's father

And They Embittered Their Lives...

During a scholarly lecture, a simple person asked Rabbi Yonasan Eybeschutz the following: The Torah says, "and they embittered their lives," but the cantillation symbol that the cantor reads is a happy tune! The simplicity of his question amused the more erudite listeners.

"Excellent Question!" said Rabbi Yonasan. "Hashem told Abraham that his offspring would be in exile for 400 years. But in fact we were in Egypt for only 210 years. Why was this? Since the Egyptians "embittered their lives," Hashem had pity on us and shortened the exile by 190 years -- surely a cause for song!

"By the way," said Rabbi Yonason, to the astonishment of his listeners, "the cantillation symbol, ḥ Kadma V'Azla,' hints at this idea by its exact numerical value: 190.

Rabbi Yehoshua Karsh

The Festive Meal

One of the unique aspects of the Seder is that we interrupt the saying of the Hallel with a meal. Why is that? The Netziv explains as follows: The purpose of going out of Egypt was to receive the Torah. With the Torah we gain the ability to serve Hashem not only through "spiritual" means, such as Torah study and prayer, but through "physical" Mitzvos as well, such as marriage, enjoying Shabbos, eating matza, marror, and the Pesach offering. We eat in the middle of Hallel in order to praise Hashem for sanctifying and elevating our physical existence. Even "mundane" things like eating are elevated when we do them in the service of Hashem.

Rabbi Mordechai Perlman

Hallel

1. In our lowliness, he remembered us...
2. and redeemed from our oppressors
3. He gives food to all flesh...
4. Praise G-d of the heavens!

These last four phrases of "Hallel HaGadol" can be seen as paralleling the four cups we drink tonight. Over the first cup we make kiddush and declare, "You chose us from all the nations." Why did G-d choose us? The Sages explain that Hashem chose the Jewish people because of their humility. "In our lowliness" -- in our humility, "He remembered us" and chose us. The second cup goes together with the Hagadah, where we tell how Hashem "redeemed us from our oppressors." Bircas Hamazon, where we recognize that "He gives food to all flesh" is said over the third cup. And with the fourth cup we sing Hallel..."Praise Hashem of the heavens!"

Rabbi Yehuda Samet

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DVAR TORAH - SHABBAS HAGADOL

by Chaim Ozer Shulman

The central portion of the Haggadah tells the story of the redemption from Egypt in a somewhat roundabout fashion. It quotes the verses of "Arami Oved Avi Vayeired Mitzraima ..." ("an Aramean attempted to destroy my father - then he descended to Egypt"), which is a portion in Devorim (Deuteronomy) dealing with the recitation made when Bikurim (first fruits) are brought to the Beis Hamikdash (Temple). The Haggadah then quotes at length from the Sifri in Devorim, which expounds on each phrase in the Bikurim recitation by referring back to the story of the descent to and exodus from Egypt as taught to us in Bereishis (Genesis) and Shmos (Exodus).

Why the circuitous excursion through a small portion relating to Bikurim in Devarim? Why not just recite directly from Shmos where the story of Egypt is dealt with much more thoroughly?

This question has been raised by many commentators, and many answers have been given. Rabbi Y.B. Soloveichik Of Blessed Memory, answered that the Haggadah desires to utilize the Torah Shebeal Peh (the oral tradition), and therefore chooses to tell the story through the Sifri in Devarim, rather

than directly from the verses in Shmos. This does not entirely answer the question, however, since there is certainly Torah Shebeal Peh expounding on the verses in Shmos that could be utilized.

The Sifri itself is puzzling as to why it constantly refers back to the story of the exodus in Shmos! And what is the connection between the story of the exodus from Egypt and bringing Bikurim?

A closer look at the Parshah of Bikurim in Parshas Ki Savoh will help answer these questions. The Torah tells us that when we bring Bikurim we should recite:

"An Aramean tried to destroy my father. He descended to Egypt ... The Egyptians afflicted us ... Hashem heard our voice ... and Hashem took us out of Egypt with a strong hand and an outstretched arm, with great awesomeness and with signs and wonders." (Devarim 26:5-7)

This is all recited and expounded on in the Haggadah. The last verse of the recitation of Bikurim is omitted from the Haggadah. This verse states: "And He brought us to this place, and He gave us this Land, a Land flowing with milk and honey." (Devarim 26:8)

Bikurim, we are told by the commentators, is a Hakaras Hatov (a token of thanksgiving) for receiving the Land of Israel. The Pesach Seder is a thanksgiving to G-d and commemoration for taking us out of Egypt and giving us the privilege to become His servants. (ViAchshav Kervanu Hamakom LiAvodaso).

The Talmud in Berachos (5a) states: "Three special gifts were given by Hashem to Bnei Yisroel only through suffering: the Torah, the Land of Israel, and the World to Come."

The recitation of Bikurim shows that in giving thanksgiving for the Land of Israel we must remember our previous suffering and that only through the suffering and subsequent redemption from Egypt were we able to receive the Land of Israel. The Haggadah tells us as well that in giving thanksgiving for the redemption and becoming Hashem's chosen people we must remember our previous slavery in Egypt and that only through the suffering were we able to experience the redemption from Egypt and become Hashem's chosen nation.

The Haggadah may have in fact chosen the recitation of the Bikurim to compare and contrast these two acts of Hakaras Hatov (thanksgiving).

The Haggadah cuts the recitation of Bikurim short, not finishing "And he brought us to this place ... a Land flowing with milk and honey," because the Haggadah commemorates the redemption. The gift of the Land of Israel is separate and is commemorated at other times, but not on Pesach.

That is why there are only four Leshonos of Geulah (four descriptions and stages of redemption): Vihotzeisi, Vihitzalti, Vigaalti, Vilakachti (I will bring you out, and I will save you, and I will redeem you, and I will take you to me), with the four cups of wine at the seder corresponding to these four stages of redemption. The fifth stage of redemption - "Viheveisi" (and I will bring you to the Land of Israel) is not recited.

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Passover 5756 - "Why is this night different?"

The Weekly Internet

P * A * R * A * S * H * A - P * A * G * E

by Mordecai Kornfeld kornfeld@netmedia.co.il

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This Shabbat HaGadol Parasha-Page has been dedicated by Stephen Flatow of

West Orange, New Jersey in memory of his daughter, Alisa M. Flatow -- Chana

Michal Z"L bat Shmuel Mordechai v'Rashka. Her first Yahrzeit is 10 Nisan, 5756. ***

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Passover (Pesach) 5756

WHY IS THIS NIGHT DIFFERENT?

QUOTE: It once happened that Rebbi Eliezer, Rebbi Yehoshua, Rebbi

Elazar ben Azariah, Rebbi Akiva and Rebbi Tarfon were celebrating the seder

in Benei Berak, and they discussed the exodus from Egypt throughout that entire night ("Oto Halaylah").

(Passover Haggadah)

In Hebrew, nouns are classified as either masculine or feminine. Masculine nouns must be qualified by masculine adjectives or pronouns, while feminine nouns are qualified by feminine modifiers. Although there is no fixed rule to determine the gender of a particular noun, there is one principle that always holds true: When a noun ends in the vowel "Kamatz" followed by a silent letter "Heh," that word is of feminine gender.

The Sh'lah, in his commentary "Matzah Shemurah" on the Passover Haggadah, asks why the author of the Haggadah uses the masculine form of the pronoun for night ("Oto") in the above selection. Since the word for night ("Laylah") has the Kamatz-Heh ending, it should be considered a feminine noun and should be preceded by the feminine form of the pronoun

--
Otah.

To answer this question, the Sh'lah quotes a Midrash (Shemot Rabba 18:11) that says that during our future redemption, in the Messianic era, the nighttime will be lit up as day. Perhaps, suggests the Sh'lah, the night of our redemption from Egypt, too, was lit up as bright as day. During that time of miraculous redemption, night "became day." In order to allude to the unusual quality of that night, the word Laylah [= night] is treated as if it were Yom [= day], which is a masculine noun. (See also Gan Raveh to Parashat Bo, Shemot 12:42.)

The Vilna Gaon, in his Haggadah commentary, expresses a similar thought in connection with the most famous of all Passover questions: "Why is this night ("HaLaylah HaZeh") different from all other nights?". Night, he says, is feminine. What we are asking here is, how can the night (i.e., of Passover) can be modified by the word "Zeh," a masculine pronoun.

Should it not be referred to as "HaLaylah *HaZot*," with the feminine pronoun?

Nighttime, notes the Gaon, is feminine by its very nature. It is for this reason, he explains, that many positive commandments ("Thou shalt...," as opposed to negative commandments -- "Thou shalt not...") must be performed exclusively during the daytime. (Examples of these are blowing the Shofar on Rosh Hashanah, holding the four species on Sukkot, wearing Tzitzit and Tefillin, etc.) This is in accordance with the "feminine" nature of the night. Just as women are exempted from fulfilling these positive commandments (see Mishnah Kiddushin, 29a), so too, the night, in its role as "female," is "exempted" from all those Mitzvot. The exceptions to this general rule are the Mitzvot performed on the seder night: the

eating of Matzah, Maror [= bitter herbs] and (in former -- and future -- times) the paschal lamb; and relating the story of the Exodus. The Torah earmarks these commandments to be performed *exclusively* at night. (It may be noted that the Mitzvot of the night of Pesach apply to women as well, even though positive commandments that are holiday-related generally do not apply to women -MK.)

This, asserts the Gaon, is the deeper meaning of the Haggadah's question: Why is this night (HaLaylah) "masculine" (HaZeh) in its properties, being laden with positive Mitzvot, whereas all other nights are feminine in nature? (The four questions can be seen to correspond to the four positive Mitzvot of Pesach night -- see the Mishnah's version of the four questions, in Pesachim 116a -MK.)

If this is the intention of the Haggadah's question, then what is the answer to this question? The Gaon does not elaborate on this. Perhaps the answer given by the Sh'lah could be applied here as well. The reason that the night of Pesach is imbued with such a masculine character is that it commemorates the night of the Exodus, which was lit up as bright as day. This is why the Torah, which usually assigns positive Mitzvot to the daylight hours, makes an exception in this instance. On this night, the Torah designates the nighttime for the performance of such Mitzvot.

II

As profound as these insights may be, those who are knowledgeable in the field of Hebrew grammar will be terribly perplexed by the comments of these great sages. The word Laylah [= night] appears hundreds of times in the Bible, and it is *always* treated as a masculine noun (BaLaylah "HaHu," BeLaylah "Echad," "Sheloshah" Laylot, etc.). It is well known as the sole consistent exception to the Kamatz-Heh rule that we mentioned at the beginning of this essay. How can the theory be advanced that it is only the Laylah of Pesach that is treated as a masculine noun?

This problem is raised by the Torah Temimah in his Haggadah commentary, among others, and it has puzzled talmudic researchers for many years. It should be pointed out that the Vilna Gaon was a grammarian of note, and even wrote a treatise on the subject of Hebrew grammar. It is out of the question to consider this a mere oversight on his part. In this essay, I would like to suggest that the true intention of the Vilna Gaon does not involve any grammatical discrepancies.

III

When one reads the Gaon's commentary carefully, it is discerned that he is dealing with a much more profound issue. Let us first review what the Vilna Gaon told us about the "femininity" of nighttime. As we mentioned, the Gaon observed that positive commandments often do not apply during the nighttime. The Gaon revealed to us that the reason for this is that nighttime is feminine in character. What makes the night feminine? Is it simply that the Hebrew word that describes it has a Kamatz-Heh ending? Perhaps there is more to it than that. Let us try to gain a broader understanding of night's femininity.

A source for the Gaon's words that the night is feminine can be found in a Midrash HaZohar. The Zohar (Bereishit 20b) asserts that daytime is when *men* are actively providing for the family's livelihood, as the verse says, "The sun shines... and men go out to do their work until evening" (Tehillim 104:22-23). The woman, on the other hand, provides for her family at night. As the verse puts it, "She arises while it is still night, and she prepares sustenance for her household..." (Mishlei 31:15 -- During the daytime, while the children are awake, she presumably doesn't have the time to do so -MK). In the words of the Zohar, the man "rules" during the daytime and the woman "rules" during the nighttime.

This comment of the Zohar, like all of the Zohar's comments, still

requires much explanation. Undoubtedly, a basic understanding of the concepts of Kabbalah is needed before the deeper messages of this passage can be appreciated. Nevertheless, perhaps we can attain at least a simple, non-Kabbalistic understanding of the Zohar's words.

The Gemara in Yevamot 77a tells us that it is characteristic of women to be less conspicuous than men. Several Biblical sources are adduced

to show that it is considered proper for a woman to remain, whenever possible, withdrawn and private. This, perhaps, is why "the woman rules during the nighttime" -- when her activities are less conspicuous. And for the same reason, the night itself, hiding her every action in a cloak of blackness, can be seen as feminine. During the nighttime, objects and events are hidden and obscured.

With this in mind we can take a new look at the words of the Gaon. Perhaps, when the Gaon noted that the word Laylah should be modified by the feminine "Zot," he was not referring to the word Laylah of the Passover Haggadah. He was referring to *every* appearance of the word in scriptures! According to the Gaon, the question of the "Mah Nishtanah" is: Why is Laylah consistently given masculine modifiers? It should be treated as a feminine noun, not only because of its Kamatz-Heh ending, but also because it is feminine by nature!

Why is this question being asked on this particular night? There is no need to discuss Hebrew grammar at the Pesach table! The answer to this can be deduced from the continuation of the Mah Nishtanah: "On all other nights we eat Chametz and Matzah, but on this night we eat only Matzah."

On the night of Pesach, we find four positive commandments that are designated to be performed specifically at night -- in contrast to nighttime's usual feminine character. What makes this night so "masculine?" Intuitively, we realize that this evening's masculine character must somehow be related to a much broader question. Why does the word Laylah, *in general*, exhibit duality? On the one hand, it has the feminine Kamatz-Heh ending, yet on the other hand, it is consistently associated with masculine modifiers.

But how, then, do we answer the questions of the Mah Nishtanah? What gives night its androgynous nature? According to the Haggadah, the solution is, "We were once servants of Pharaoh's in Egypt, and Hashem freed us from there..." What does that have to do with anything?! Perhaps, according to the Gaon's reading of the four (or actually five) questions, we may explain the Haggadah's answer as follows:

IV

The Talmud likens the world that we live in at present, rife with sorrow and suffering, to the night, while the radiant, joyful life of the World to Come is compared to the day (Chagigah 12a etc., see also Yesayah 21:11, Zechariah 14:7). This metaphor is very apt. In the present world, we are often blind to Hashem's presence in, and control of, the world. We see injustice and suffering where tranquillity would appear to be called for, and vice versa. Our perception of the hand of Hashem that is guiding the world is blurred -- it is as if Hashem is "hiding His countenance from us" (Devarim 31:17). As we have demonstrated above (section IV), nighttime is when objects are concealed and inconspicuous. It is therefore justified to compare this world, where even the ultimate existence -- Hashem's presence -- is elusive and often hidden from view, to nighttime.

In the Messianic era, however, Hashem will make His majesty clear for all to see. All of the events that took place on this world will finally be understood to be only for our own benefit (see Pesachim 50a). Hashem's intervention in all that takes place on this world will be clearly witnessed by all of mankind. The presence of Hashem will be "clear as day" (see Parasha-Page Sukkot 5756 section II).

Similarly, just as the word for night in Hebrew has the feminine suffix, this world is looked at as "feminine," in comparison to the World to Come. As the Midrash tells us,

All the songs of praise of this world are referred to as Shirah [= song], in the feminine form... while the song to be sung at the future redemption is called Shir, in the masculine form.

(Mechilta, to Shemot 15:1)

Just as a woman delivers a child and then suffers the pains of labor and delivery with the birth of the following child, so too, all the salvations of this world are followed by new periods of suffering and anguish. In the future, however, there will come a salvation following which we will no longer endure suffering Upon this salvation we shall sing to Hashem the "song of the male."

(Tosafot, Pesachim 116b)

In our present world, we often have trouble discerning the guiding hand of Hashem. Nevertheless, it is right there with us all of the time. All the troubles and misfortunes that befall us are intended exclusively for our own benefit. (We discussed some of the benefits of exile and suffering in the Parasha-Pages for Metzora 5755, HaChodesh 5755 and Va'etchanan 5754.) At the dawn of the Messianic era, this will become self evident. In retrospect, we will be able to appreciate all that Hashem has done for us throughout history. This is the meaning of the statement we quoted above (section I), that in the future redemption night will become day. The tribulations of the Exile -- which conceal Hashem's presence as if in a cloak of darkness -- will be revealed as having been clearly wrought by the Hand of Hashem.

On the night of the Exodus from Egypt we caught a glimpse of this phenomenon. Night turned to day, as we suddenly realized that our enslavement to the Egyptians was a necessary prerequisite for becoming the dedicated servants of Hashem. This is what makes the night of Pesach different from all other nights. On this night, we realize that night itself has the potential to become day. The inconspicuously "feminine" Presence of Hashem gives way to the clear manifestation of Hashem's Presence. And this is why we were given positive commandments to perform in

the nighttime on the anniversary of the Egyptian exodus. In fact, it is only in reference to the evening of that Exodus -- or to the night of the Final Redemption -- that we find night referred to as "Layil," without the usual Kamatz-Heh ending! (See Shemot 12:42; Yalkut Shimoni II, end of #418;

Targum to Yeshayah 16:3; Rashi, Sanhedrin 94a s.v. Shomer; Yeshayah 30:29.)

But the lesson does not stop there. Even when we return to our daily lives, and the Divine Presence once again "fades into obscurity," we take with us what we have learned at the Passover Seder. We remind ourselves that although the "night" (the Divine Presence in this world) appears feminine, if we look at it from the proper perspective, its true, masculine (= clearly visible) nature can be observed -- just as it was on that special night of the Exodus from Egypt! The very grammar of the word Laylah directs us to this conclusion. It has the *appearance* of being feminine, but is in reality masculine. We are sometimes under the impression that our Exile is "feminine," that the conduct of Hashem is hidden and inexplicable. But the real truth is that it is plainly there. This is how "We were once slaves of Pahraoh's..." explains the grammatical anomaly of "Laylah."

May we soon merit to witness the ultimate manifestation of Hashem's Glory and to reveal the underlying "masculinity" of the long, bitter night of Exile!

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Pesach Toafos Harim - Mesores Avos Lechag Hapesach

Rabbi Dr. Yechiel Michael Kossowsky

Selections translated from the Pesach chapter of Sefer Toafos Harim
Vehaya ki yomru alechem beneychem, ma haavodah hazos lachem - The Mechilta states: "Evil tidings were given to the people of Israel at that moment, and some say good tidings were given to them, that they were destined to give birth to children and children's children".

People ask: If the children and children's children are wicked, how can this be good news? The answer is: One of the main reasons for the wicked son's rebellion is the notion entertained by each and every generation's rebels that they know more than their parents. In their opinion the deeds of the parents are not good or right. They "know better". That is why he forsakes the way and the teachings of his parents and seeks a new path in life. That is the bad news.

However, when his son after him asks his own father the same question, and decides that his father's wicked ways are wrong, and he rebels against them, saying, Ma haavoda hazos lachem, then he is often actually returning to the ways of grandparents, and that is good news. So both are true; the question can bring us bad news and good news at the same time...

Vayehi bihiyos Yehoshua Biyericho.... ata basi: Haftarah; See Rashi and Malbim who explain that Joshua knew that this was a prophetic vision, and his question was, "What is the meaning of this vision?" Halanu, "Did you come to help us or Letzarenu, did you come to help our enemies?" And the angel answered, Ata basi, I have come about the issue of "Now" (Tal. Megila

3). I am not speaking of the future, of the outcome of the struggle, but about your own conduct at this very moment. "Last night you overlooked the regular daily evening offering and today you have overlooked the study of Torah".

The importance of the prophecy was that at a time of war and siege it might seem there are more important concerns that the study of Torah and the daily service. So the angel appeared to warn Joshua that Torah and Tefila are the primary concern of every Jew no matter what the circumstances and time. So important to the Jewish people and its survival are the Beth Midrash and the Synagogue.

Atzamos yeveshos: In the prophecy of Yehezkel's "dry bones" we perceive three categories: first, bones sere and dry with no moisture whatsoever; then bodies with flesh and sinews, but not living; and finally a living camp.

Those who say avda tikvasenu... reflect those Jews who have lost all hope of Jewish survival and have despaired about the future of the people and the land of Israel. Higher than them are those who have made aliya to Israel, who build and defend it. Yet they lack a spiritual essence; they are bodies, flesh and sinews, but they do not have the spirit of life - of eternal life. The House of Israel cannot look to them for its survival into the far future. The house of Israel will ultimately be built from the great and vital living camp that has the spirit of God calling from its voice, and glories in the name of God....

Shehora ani venava... shehora ani bemaasay venava bemaase avosay (Midrash Rabbah). The song of Songs, a dialogue between Israel and their beloved in Heaven, here speaks of a generation which has strayed and which regrets its transgressions, remembering with longing the deeds of their parents who taught and trained them to walk in the way of truth. Despite their sins, the teaching of their parents struck deep roots and many beautiful flowers still blossom because of it. Keahaley Kedar... which are ugly and dark outside, but inside are full of treasures, so that previous generation which had a traditional upbringing in a warm Jewish atmosphere still retain some fine Jewish traits because of it.

The generation that is missing and is intermarrying at such a catastrophic rate did not have such an influence. Restoring that missing inner spirit in the hearts of the next generation will only happen through chinuch, not only in the school, but through the creation of a spiritually rich, warm Jewish environment....

(Transcribed in the Pesach section)

Velo yeraeh es poney HaShem reykam, ish kemasnas yado ... (Torah reading for the last day of Pesach). The Mechilta comments on the passage, velo yerau es panay reykam Ma simcha haamura leadam berauy lo, af reiyah haamura lagavoha barauy lo (according to the version of the text as amended by the Gaon of Vilna). A man comes before God on this holiday in the wrong mood.

We come with our hands open to receive. We want God to bless us with all manner of blessing, joy, success, health, etc. We want a great deal. What

are we ready to give in return? Lo yaraeh es panay reykam! Do not come with empty hands! What kind of gifts can we give the Almighty? A thought about Teshuva... a resolve to live a life where there is more Torah and sincerity

in fulfilling mitzvos.... If you want God to grant you gifts barauy lecha, suitable for you, then you must give Him barauy lo, as far as you are able to do so. There are no free gifts here! The Almighty doesn't require a complete personality revolution, but a movement, a new step in His direction, Shuva eylay vaashuva aleychem (Malachi 3). Ish kemasnas yado, and according to the value of your gift shall the blessing come from the Almighty, Kebirchas hashem elokecha asher nasan lach.

As we leave the presence of the holy forbears we have joined at Yizkor, we must see that we are worthy of taking something with us, and not to go out of God's presence Reykam.

The Author: Rabbi Dr. Michael Kossowsky of blessed memory was Rav of the Beth Midrash Hagadol in Johannesburg until his death in 1965. His daughter, Mrs. Rywka Shulman teaches Tanach in Stern College and his son-in law, Rabbi Dr. Nisson Shulman, is Director of the Gertrude and Morris Bienenfeld Department of Rabbinic Services of MSDCS, RIETS. His son is Rabbi Zalman Kossowsky (AA) of Zurich. The above Passover thought capsules are translated from his book, Toafos Harim, published posthumously by his widow, Rebbetzin Chiena Kossowsky, Aleha HaShalom.

<http://yu1.yu.edu/riets/torah/halacha/willig1.htm>

Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim
Rabbi Mordechai Willig

The Gemara states that women are obligated to drink the four cups at the

Seder, as well as to fulfill the mitzvos of megilla and ner Chanuka, despite the exemption of mitzvas asheh shehaz'man grama, because they, too, were saved by the miracle. Rav Soloveitchik z"tl explained that these three mitzvos do not merely commemorate miracles, but rather their very essence

involves the publicizing of the miracle, pirsumei nisa. Therefore, only these three mitzvos, and not matza, sukka, tefilin, and others which commemorate yetzias mitzrayim, are incumbent upon women.

The Rav z"tl added that this special character of these three mitzvos is reflected in the extra bracha, she'asa nisim, recited when they are performed. On Pesach, however, we do not say she'asa nisim. This question

was raised by Rabbi Yosef Tov-Elem in the Yotzer for Shabbos Hagadol. He

answers that the bracha of ga'al Yisroel recited in conjunction with the hagada renders she'asa nisim redundant.

These mitzvos of pirsumei nisa defy other exemptions as well. The Mishna

obligates a pauper to drink the four kosos, even if charity funds must be used, whereas for other mitzvos asheh one need not spend more than one fifth

of his money. The Rambam extended this ruling to ner Chanuka, and, presumably, it would apply to megilla as well.

Similarly, one must drink the four kosos even if it is somewhat harmful, although he may be exempt from other mitzvos that harm him. Finally, pirsumei nisa in the case of the megilla, overrides even Talmud Torah d'rabim, while other mitzvos do not.

Having defined the category of mitzvos of pirsumei nisa and its unique halachos, the question remains: Why did chazal create this category? Is there any precedent in the Torah itself?

The Chinuch rules that women are commanded to perform the mitzvah of sippur yetzias mitzrayim. The Minchas Chinuch asks, shouldn't the exemption of z'man grama apply?

Perhaps these two questions answer one another. The Mitzvah of sippur yetzias mitzrayim, which, in its very essence is publicizing a miracle, is the paradigmatic Torah mitzvah of pirsumei nisa. If so, the Chinuch correctly assumes that women are obligated, as evidenced by the three rabbinic mitzvos patterned after sippur yetzias mitzrayim.

This relationship emerges from the Yotzer which establishes ga'al yisroel,

which is recited after sippur yetzias mitzrayim as the bracha of she'asa nisim on Pesach. Perforce, sippur yetzias mitzrayim is also a mitzvah of pirsumei nisa.

Although the rationale of the Chinuch's ruling is thus explained, his source remains questionable. Some suggest that sippur yetzias mitzrayim is connected to Matza (lechem she'onim alav etc.). Therefore, women, who must eat matza, which is juxtaposed to chometz, must also fulfill sippur y"m.

The Tashbetz links a woman's obligation in mitzvos of pirsumei nisa to her

requirement to offer a Korban Pesach, which is derived from the word "nefashos." If so, this might be the source of her obligation of sippur y"m which is related to Korban Pesach as well (Va'amertem Zevach Pesach etc.).

Similarly, the Netziv derives the obligation of a poor person to offer the Korban Pesach from the same pasuk, and bases the rabbinic requirement that

even a poor person drink the four kosos on this Torah obligation. Presumably, one would also have to spend more than one fifth of his

money

to fulfill sippur y"m.

There appears to be a contradiction in the Rambam whether women are obligated in the mitzvah of sippur y"m. Perhaps, there are two halachos of sippur y"m: an independent mitzvah, from which women are exempt as a z'man grama, and sippur y"m as an aspect of matza or Korban Pesach, which is incumbent upon women. The Rambam, therefore, does not mention sippur y"m in the list of mitzvos women must perform even though they are z'man grama. However, he also omits sippur y"m from the list of mitzvos aseh from which women are exempt since, as a practical matter, they are obligated.

These two separate halachos of sippur y"m may have their sources in the two pesukim that the Rambam quotes in introducing the mitzvah. Zachor es hayom hazeh precedes the mention of matzo, and is an independent mitzvah. V'hegadol l'bincha, which follows matzo, refers to sippur y"m as related to matzo. For this reason, the second part of the posuk, ba'avur zeh, refers to matzo which must be present when sippur y"m is fulfilled. This duality emerges from the two Mishnayos which describe sippur y"m. The first describes the lengthy recounting of slavery and Exodus, while the second begins with Raban Gamliel Omer, linking sippur y"m to Pesach, matza and maror. Remarkably, the Rambam rules that the matzo is not on the table until the second part, confirming that the first part, derived from Zachor, is independent of the mitzvah of matzo.

Similarly, the Mishna B'rura writes that women must be present when R. Gamliel Omer is said. Apparently, she can miss the first part, if necessary, because sippur y"m as an independent mitzva is a z'man grama. Only the second part, which relates to Pesach, matza and maror, is mandatory.

This analysis could explain the Rama's custom of reciting the Hagada until R. Gamliel Omer on Shabbos Hagadol. The Gra objects, because me'b'od yom is explicitly excluded from ba'avur zeh. However, based on the above, this refers only to sippur y"m which is related to matza. Therefore, the Rama concedes that Raban Gamliel Omer should not be said. The independent mitzva of sippur y"m, however, is not excluded and may be performed, customarily, on Shabbos Hagadol.

The Chasam Safer allows the recital of the story of the Hagada during Tosefes yom tov, even though matzo must be eaten after dark. But doesn't ba'avur zeh teach that sippur y"m is fulfilled only when the time for the mitzvah of matza has arrived? Perhaps the independent mitzvah of sippur y"m can be fulfilled during tosefes, and it is sufficient to say R. Gamliel omer after dark.

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"Menachem Leibtag <ml@etzion.org.il>" " Chumash shiur...

Subject: CHAG HA'MATZOT

by Menachem Leibtag

The "shloshim" for my father falls out today, the seventh of Nisan. The following shiur relates to his life, and is dedicated in his memory.

PESACH AND CHAG HA'MATZOT

According to Chumash, most Jewish calendars are incorrect! The 14th of Nisan is NOT Erev Pesach, rather PESACH.

Likewise, the 15th to the 21st of Nisan are NOT the seven days of PESACH, rather, the seven days of CHAG HA'MATZOT. [Read Vayikra 23:4-6 & Bamidbar 28:16-18, and see for yourself.]

What difference does it make? Are not Pesach and Chag Ha'Matzot two names for the same holiday?

Surprisingly enough, they are not! Even though these two holidays happen to 'overlap' on the night of the 15th of Nisan ("leil ha'Seder"), each "chag" is distinct.

The following shiur explores the Biblical roots of these two holidays, not only to show how each is distinct, but also to show the deeper meaning of their relationship.

INTRODUCTION

A brief summary of the definition of these two holidays in Chumash will help clarify this distinction:

* PESACH - An Offering of Thanksgiving

Definition:

Each year we are commanded to bring a special korban on the afternoon of the 14th of Nisan, and eat the korban that evening, together with Matzah & Maror, while thanking God for our deliverance from "makkat bchorot".

(See 12:8-10,14,24-27,43-50)

Reason:

Because God saved (passed over) the houses of Bnei Yisrael on that evening when he smote the Egyptians. (See 12:26-27)

* CHAG HA'MATZOT- A Holiday in Commemoration of Yetziat Mitzrayim

Definition:

From the 15th to the 21st of Nisan, it is forbidden to eat chametz - to own it, or even see it; and it is a mitzva to eat matza, especially on the first night. (See 12:15-20; 13:3-8)

Reason:

To remember that God TOOK US OUT OF EGYPT. (See 12:17; 13:8)

Eating matza reminds us of an event that took place when we left Egypt. Due to the rushed circumstances, Bnei Yisrael had to bake their dough in the form of matza. (See 12:39)

In other words, on Pesach we thank God for saving us from "makkat bchorot" (the tenth plague), while on Chag Ha'matzot we remember Yetziat Mitzrayim, our journey from Egypt into the desert.

Considering that "makkat bchorot" actually led to Yetziat Mitzrayim, why doesn't the Torah simply combine these two holidays together? Why can't the yearly offering of the korban Pesach be in thanksgiving for the ENTIRE process of Yetziat Mitzrayim; not just for that one specific event? Likewise, why can't eating matza remind us of our salvation from the tenth plague, as well as our journey out of Egypt?

WHAT IS CHAG HA'MATZOT?

When we examine Chag Ha'matzot in Chumash, several additional questions arise which have no apparent explanation:

1) Why is this holiday celebrated for seven days?

Why not one day or two days, etc., why specifically seven?
[Recall that Chumash does not provide a reason for seven days, nor does it mention that Kriyat Yam Suf took place on the seventh day after the Exodus.]

2) Why is the primary mitzva on Chag Ha'matzot NOT TO EAT CHAMETZ?

Should it not be TO EAT MATZA! (See 13:3,6)

[Undoubtedly, not eating chametz encourages one to eat matza, but that does not explain why chametz is the primary mitzva?]

3. Why is the prohibition against chametz so stringent? e.g.:
One can not OWN it or SEE it! Any leftover must be burnt.
The punishment for eating chametz is "karet", i.e. being cut off from the nation of Israel!

[Before continuing, you should read Shmot 12:1-20, noting its two sections: Korban Pesach (3-14) and Chag Ha'Matzot (15-20).]

When one examines these sources in Chumash more carefully, an even greater question arises: Why are the laws of Chag Ha'Matzot given BEFORE Bnei Yisrael leave Egypt?

Let's explain: The mitzva to eat matza for seven days (12:15-20) is given to Moshe Rabeinu on the FIRST of Nisan (12:1-2), together with the laws of the Korban Pesach (12:3-14). Obviously, the laws of Korban Pesach must be given BEFORE "makkat bchorot", because the blood is to be sprinkled on the doorposts in anticipation of the plague. Eating matza, however, is to remind us of the matza which Bnei Yisrael baked on their journey, AFTER they left Egypt. Why should God command us to commemorate an event which has not yet taken place?

[Recall that Bnei Yisrael baked matza for what appears to be a purely incidental reason. Because they were rushed out of Egypt, and had not made any other provisions, they took their dough (which they had planned to bake in Egypt) with them and baked it as matza during their journey (read 12:39 carefully!).]

Some commentators even suggest that the mitzva of Chag Ha'Matzot may have been given later, and thus, psukim 15-20 are placed out of chronological order (see Ibn Ezra 12:17). According to this approach, we simply have to restate our question: Why does the Torah take the laws concerning Chag Ha'Matzot, given later, and purposely attach them to the laws of Korban Pesach? MATZA - AL SHUM MAH?

Up until this point, all of our questions have rested on one basic assumption - that the primary reason that we eat matza (and thus, don't eat chametz) is to remember the matza which we ate when leaving Egypt. This assumption is very popular because it is the very explanation provided by the Hagada:

Matzot al shum mah? [For what reason do we eat matza?]:

Because the dough of our ancestors had not time to become leaven, when God appeared unto them and redeemed them, as it said: "And they baked the dough which they had brought out of Egypt 'matzot' and not 'chametz', because they were rushed out of Egypt and could not tarry, nor had they made any other provisions" (Shmot 12:39)

True, this pasuk explains why we eat matza on the Seder night, but it DOES NOT explain why we can't eat or own chametz for seven days!

These questions compel us to search for an independent reason for the celebration of Chag Ha'Matzot, not related to the matza which Bnei Yisrael baked on their journey; a reason that will explain:

- a) Why "isur chametz" is the primary mitzva;
- b) Why it is celebrated for seven days; and
- c) Why its commandment was given together with korban Pesach, before Bnei Yisrael actually left Egypt.

CHAMETZ - A SYMBOL

In the Torah, the prohibition of "chametz" is not limited to Chag Ha'Matzot. In the Mikdash, for example, chametz is not permitted on the "mizbayach" all year long! [Vayikra 2:11,6:9-10] Why?

The precise reason is not clear, however, chametz appears to represent something which is antithetical to the concept of 'korbanot'. Obviously, there is nothing inherently wrong with chametz, rather it serves as a symbol. Likewise, by Chag Ha'Matzot, chametz serves as a symbol.

In Chazal we find numerous suggestions as to what chametz symbolizes: "ga'ava" (haughtiness); "yetzer ha'rah" (evil inclinations); "avodah zara" (idol worship), etc. Being a symbol, its various properties can represent various concepts.

[For example, one aspect of chametz could be its property that it causes bread to appear much more appetizing than a mere mixture of flour and water. Another could be its property causing dough to rise, possibly symbolizing the complexity of a process, etc.]

The connection between "avoda zara" and chametz on Chag Ha'Matzot is especially interesting - the laws of both are almost identical! Both carry an "isur karet" and "isur ha'naah" (one can not have benefit from it). Similarly, if found, both must be burned, i.e. totally destroyed. [The Zohar deals with this in detail- "v'akmal".]

The special prohibition on Chag Ha'Matzot of "bal yay'raeh u'bal y'matzei" - not owning or seeing chametz - definitely supports this comparison.

Let's suppose that chametz on Chag Ha'Matzot does indeed represent "avodah zara". Consequently, let's assume that getting rid of our chametz symbolizes getting rid of our "avoda zara". If so, why is chametz prohibited only for the week of Chag Ha'Matzot, why not all year long?

BACK TO SEFER SHMOT

In light of our shiurim on Sefer Shmot, the connection is obvious. Recall that God called upon Bnei Yisrael to rid themselves of their "avoda zara", i.e. their Egyptian culture, BEFORE the redemption process began. [See previous shiur on Va'eyra.] Although this point was only alluded to in Sefer Shmot (6:6-9), in Sefer Yechezkel it was stated explicitly:

Yechezkel, while rebuking the elders of Yehuda in Bavel, reminds them of the behavior of their forefathers - PRIOR to Yetziat Mitzraim:

"On the day that I chose Israel... that same day I swore to take them out of Egypt into a land flowing with milk and honey... And I said to them [at that time]: Each man must RID himself of his detestable ways, and not DEFILE ("tumah") himself with the fetishes of Egypt - [for] ANI HASHEM ELOKEICHEM" . But, they REBELLED against Me, and they did not OBEY me, no one rid himself from his detestable ways...and I resolved to pour out My fury upon them..." (Yechezkel 20:5-8)

Despite God's demand that Bnei Yisrael repent prior to the Exodus, to be worthy of redemption, they did not 'listen'. They deserved to be destroyed!

[God saved them, Yechezkel explains, for the sake of His Name: "va'a'as l'maan shmi, l'vilti ha'chel l'einei hagoyim" (20:9).]

Before "makkat bchorot", God gave Bnei Yisrael one last chance to prove their loyalty - to offer the Korban Pesach - a declaration of their readiness to listen to Him. The word - "pesach" - the name of this korban, reflects this very purpose. God must 'PASS OVER' the houses of Bnei Yisrael because they deserve to be punished (see Shmot 12:27)! [One 'passes over' something which he is supposed to 'step on'; had Bnei Yisrael been righteous, there would not have been a punishment that required 'passing over'.]

NOSTALGIA OR DESTINY

Therefore, Pesach and Chag HaMatzot are thematically connected. When we offer the korban Pesach, we must remember not only WHAT HAPPENED, but also WHY God saved us, for what purpose!

To help man concretize these sentiments of teshuva, a symbol is required. Thus, getting rid of one's chametz symbolizes getting rid of those influences that corrode one's spiritual existence.

The korban Pesach - the "korban Hashem" (see Bamidbar 9:7 and context) - is not just an expression of thanksgiving but also a DECLARATION of loyalty; - a willingness to obey; - a readiness to fulfill our Divine destiny. Therefore, the commandment to keep Chag HaMatzot (12:15-20) follows immediately after the commandment to offer the korban Pesach (12:3-14). Every year, we must not only thank God for our redemption, we must show Him that we are truly worthy of redemption by getting rid of our chametz, the symbol of our "avoda zara":

"Seven days you should eat matza, but **EVEN ON THE FIRST DAY** you must REMOVE ALL CHAMETZ from your houses, for whoever eats chametz on these SEVEN days, that person shall be cut off from the nation of Israel" (12:15)

[Chazal's understanding that "yom ha'rishon" refers to the 14th of Nisan (not the 15th), at the time when the Korban Pesach is offered, now takes on additional significance.]

This interpretation also explains the special halacha regarding korban Pesach mentioned in Parshat Mishpatim and repeated in Parshat Ki-tisa: "lo tishchat al CHAMETZ dam zivchi" - You may not offer the Pesach while owning chametz - (23:18, 34:25). It is meaningless to offer a korban pesach if one did not first rid himself of his chametz, i.e. his "avoda zara".

[For a similar reason, one must perform brit Milah, before offering the korban Pesach - see 12:43-49.]

The reason for Chag HaMatzot now becomes clear. Our declaration of thanksgiving when offering the korban Pesach is meaningless if not accompanied with the proper spiritual preparation. Just as Bnei Yisrael were commanded to rid themselves of their "avoda zara" in anticipation of their redemption, so too future generations. By getting rid of our chametz in preparation for Korban Pesach, we remind ourselves of the need to cleanse ourselves from any "avoda zara" which we may have adopted. The 'spring cleaning' of our homes must be accompanied by a 'spring cleaning' of our souls.

SHEVA MI YODAY'AH?

Two questions still remain. Why is chametz prohibited for 'seven days'? Why is there also a mitzva to each matza, at least on the first night.

Recall our explanation of Yetziat Mitzraim in the shiur on Parshat Beshalach. The korban Pesach alone was not enough to

prepare Bnei Yisrael for Matan Torah. Instead of the original plan to travel directly to Har Sinai, a three day journey, God took them on a seven week 'training mission' out in the desert; carefully controlling their supply of food and water. This was necessary to help Bnei Yisrael rid themselves of all ties with Egyptian culture, especially their instinctive dependance on Egypt and its life-style.

Thus, Chag HaMatzot commemorates not only the events of Yetziat Mitzrayim, but also their PURPOSE. As we remember that journey into the desert, we must remember that process of breaking our dependance on Mitzryaim, and developing a dependance upon God (see Dvarim 8:1-6!).

Unlike the one time act of a korban, this 'teshuva' requires a routine. This process of 'soul searching', represented by the total ban on chametz, can not be completed in one evening. Rather an entire week, the seven days of Chag Hamatzot, is required to internalize that commitment which we re-affirm every Pesach on 'leil haSeder'.

Seven days, throughout Chumash, is the basic unit of routine. Be it the routine of a week (six days followed by shabbat), or seven days to cleanse oneself from "tumah" (see Tazria Metzora and tumat meyt), or seven days of the Miluim, etc.

These seven days not only remind us to get rid of "avoda zara", they also set us into a new routine, a routine of dependance upon God.

EATING MATZA

Similarly, by eating matza on Chag HaMatzot, especially on the first night, the very same food we ate during the Exodus, we remember the positive aspect of this 'educational' process, i.e. growing dependant on God.

If we look carefully, this may be the meaning of what the Torah tells us that we are to tell our children, when they ask as - Why are we eating matza?

"And you shall tell your son on that day: **IT IS FOR THIS PURPOSE** ("ba'avur zeh") that God took us out of Egypt - and **THIS** shall serve as a sign on your hand and as a reminder on your forehead- **IN ORDER THAT** the TORAH OF GOD may be in your mouth.." (13:8-9, see context- compare with Dvarim 6:20-25!)

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This shiur is dedicated in memory of mr. abraham buchman of chicago, whose yearzeit is 6 nisan. Mr. buchman was involved in chinuch for many years. In his honor, the buchman scholarship fund was established by the family in 1988, to support a talmid of the herzog teachers college in pursuing new avenues in the field of education. This shiur is dedicated in memory of azriel ben harav menachem mendel (taragin). This shiur is dedicated in honor of our brother david greenstone's twenty-first birthday. May you continue to be a Source of pride to your whole family ad me-ah va-esrim shana. From the hagege and fredj families.

"And You Shall Know That I Am The Lord"

by Harav Yehuda Amital shlita

"And God said to Moshe, 'Come to Pharaoh for I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants in order that I may show these, my signs, before him. And that you may tell your

son and your grandson of My doings (asher hit'alalti) in Egypt, and the signs which I performed among them, and you shall know that I am the Lord." (Shemot 10:1-2)

Rashi explains on the spot: "Hit'alalti" means "with which I amused myself." Rashi's words are surprising: Surely there can be no "amusement" before the King of kings?! To what can this "amusement" refer?

In the Pesach Haggada we say, "Avadim hayinu le-Far'o be-Mitzrayim (We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt)." The servitude to which we thereby refer is not necessarily the physical toil and pain. A person who voluntarily puts himself into a situation of hard labor or intense suffering is not a slave but rather, for all intents and purposes, a free agent. On the other hand, if a person is forced against his will to wear royal robes and is unable to remove them, then he is truly a slave despite the magnificent garb, or rather because of it.

Bnei Yisrael, while in Egypt, should have cried out bitterly for the simple reason that they were ruled by Pharaoh, king of Egypt, rather than by the Master of the Universe. But sometimes the slave is so deeply immersed in his servitude that he does not mourn over the fact that he is being ruled by others; all his crying is due solely to the intensity of his exertion. This slave has already become, in essence, the material possession of his master; it would never occur to him to question the legitimacy of the master's control over him. All he can hope for is the easing of his workload. This was the pitiful level to which Bnei Yisrael had sunk in Egypt. So complete was their subjugation that their cry was only over their harsh labor. And it was from this situation of degradation that their prayers rose heavenward:

"And Bnei Yisrael sighed from the labor and they cried out, and their cry rose to God from the labor. And God heard their groan, and God remembered his covenant with Avraham, with Yitzchak and with Yaakov, and God looked upon Bnei Yisrael and God knew." (Shemot 2:23-24)

This moment marked the beginning of the redemptive process. During the course of the ten plagues, Bnei Yisrael gradually became more and more free of the yoke of Egypt. Their growing freedom reached such a level that, during the plague of darkness, God said to Moshe, "Speak, please, to the people, that each man should ask of his neighbor vessels of silver..." (Shemot 11:2). This is neither an order nor a command, but rather a request - "please." It is as though God told Moshe, "Bnei Yisrael may do as they please now; I can only make requests of them."

As Bnei Yisrael became increasingly liberated from their servitude, Pharaoh simultaneously sank into a bondage of his own. His garb was still royal, to be sure, but he was not free to act as he wished. The King of kings was hardening his heart, compelling him to refuse to release Bnei Yisrael and forcing him into an untenable position. This was the greatest slavery: he had no free choice, and when a person no longer has free choice he has lost his "tzelem Elokim" (Divine image). The level of Pharaoh's new-found subjugation was conversely proportional to Bnei Yisrael's diminishing status as his slaves.

This is God's "amusement" with Pharaoh. It is to this

irony that Rashi refers, and it is this which we are told to recount to our children and grandchildren. The significance of it is stated clearly: it is in order that "you shall know that I am the Lord."

Bnei Yisrael leave slavery, attain free choice, and through it all they must remember that "I am the Lord." "I" is a word that should shake each of us to his very foundations. I - but who am I and what am I!? There is only one "I" in the world - "I am the Lord." He, and only He, is in charge, and all of creation runs according to His plans. Yes, man has free choice, but he does not rule the world - it was not he who created it. Man's choice is limited within the processes set in motion by God. The Zohar compares man to a dog tied to a chain. He believes that he is free, but in truth he cannot break away from the framework into which he is placed.

Where, then, is man's free choice? Even the whole problem of Divine knowledge and human free will lies beyond the scope of our understanding. It is essential, though, for us to realize that only the Master of the Universe is able to say "I" - He is the unique reality, determining all the processes of creation. Bnei Yisrael are freed from slavery, but they are obligated to tell their children and grandchildren of the "amusement" that was performed in Egypt, in order that they will know that "I am the Lord." The chain has indeed been loosened, but will never be released.

The following story is told of the Rebbe of Mezritch: A stranger once came and knocked on his front door. The Rebbe asked, "Who is there?" The response was, "I." The Rebbe was shocked that a Jew could utter "I" so easily. "'I'? How can you say such a thing?" The Rebbe opened the door and invited the stranger inside. He asked if he had eaten yet and, upon receiving an answer in the negative, told the guest, "Go to such-and-such a place, a certain distance from here, and eat there." Since the Rebbe had instructed him thus, the Jew went on his way. The road was long and tiring, and he walked and walked, becoming covered with dust along the way. After a hard journey he arrived at the place, filthy and exhausted. A wedding was just about to begin in the village and, as was the custom, a festive meal was offered at the site for the poor. The man joined the poor guests and ate with them. At the end of the meal it was discovered that a silver spoon was missing. Immediately, all suspicion was focused on this Jew, since he was the only stranger, and everyone turned to him accusingly: "You stole!" The Jew replied, "Not I!" They continued to torment him and accuse him, and he steadfastly repeated, "Not I! Not I!" Eventually he managed to escape from them, and started his journey back towards the Rebbe, wondering all the way what the Rebbe's reason could have been for sending him to that place. He arrived at the Rebbe's house, knocked on the door, and once again the Rebbe asked, "Who is there?" The Jew was about to answer "I", as he had been accustomed to do, but suddenly he caught himself and answered, "Not I." Only through suffering and pain had the message penetrated his consciousness - now he knew that he was "not I." There is only one "I" - and that is "He."

(Adapted from a speech delivered on Shabbat Parashat Bo 5733. Translated by Kaeren Fish.)

"The Torah Speaks to Four Sons"

by Harav Aharon Lichtenstein shlit"a

In the Mekhilta (Bo, parasha 18), we find the following celebrated passage:

"What are the testimonies and statutes and laws which God commanded us?" - From here we say that there are four sons: one wise, one wicked, one simple, and one who does not know to ask.

"The wise son - what does he say? 'What are the testimonies and statutes and laws which the Lord our God commanded us?' You shall initiate him into the laws of Pesach, beginning with 'No dessert is to be eaten after the consuming the Pesach sacrifice.'

"The wicked son - what does he say? 'What is this service to you?' 'To you,' not 'to him.' Since he has removed himself from the community and denied the major principle of faith, you shall smite his teeth, and say to him: 'It is for this that God acted for me when I left Egypt' - 'for me,' not 'for you.' Had you been there, you would not have been saved.'

"The simple son - what does he say? 'What is this?' You shall say to him, 'With a strong hand God took us out of Egypt, from the house of bondage.'

"And he who knows not to ask - you shall initiate the conversation for him, as it is written, 'And you shall tell your son on that day.'"

Looking at this section of the Haggada, we see that the questions posed by each of the sons differ one from the other, both in content and in their respective standpoints.

The wise son asks about the details of the halakhot - "What are the testimonies and the statutes and the laws?" He asks from within the framework of Halakha. He asks the key questions, the questions which would be asked by anyone immersed in Torah learning. Someone who never asks these questions, who peruses without analyzing, might fulfill the mitzva of learning Torah, but his connection with Torah is severely flawed - he has no connection with the depth of Torah, and there is no depth to his connection with it.

The question posed by the wicked son is different. The wicked son poses his question from outside the framework of Halakha. He is familiar with Halakha, but remains outside of it, "above it," as it were. As a result, the content of his question is also different. He does not inquire about the details of Halakha, but rather says in a general and dismissive manner "What is this service to you?" It is as if to say, "I know this routine, and I consider it unnecessary."

The difference in attitude and perspective exists not only between the wise and the wicked sons, but also between the wicked and the simple sons. The questions posed both by the wicked and by the simple sons, in contrast to that posed by the wise son, are connected with the entry into the land, but there the similarity ends. For the wicked son, the connection is an intrinsic one: "And it shall be when you come to the land... and you shall observe this service. And it will be that when your sons say to you, 'What is this service to you?'...." The wicked son asks his question against the background of the entry into the land, with a full awareness of the Halakha. To his mind, since the national and social

reality has changed, there is no longer any need or justification for antiquated laws and statutes, as it were, which were designed for existence in exile.

For the simple son, on the other hand, the entry into the land is incidental to the question. It serves to sketch for us a background of increasing distance in time from the Exodus and Mount Sinai, a background of forgetfulness and ignorance. "When your son asks you tomorrow" - Rashi explains (based on the Mekhilta): "There is a 'tomorrow' which is immediate, and there is a 'tomorrow' which is after some time." The simple son asks his question 'tomorrow - after some time.' Hence the content of his question - "What is this?" What is going on here? He is unfamiliar with the system.

Two pedagogic directives issue from the Torah's words and from Chazal's commentary on this parasha:

The first is the need for careful differentiation in the fields of education and outreach. There is no one answer, eternal and triumphant, to every question. Rather, the Torah teaches us that each and every generation, society and cultural milieu requires its own type of response. As the questioners differ one from the other in background and attitude, so must the answers.

The second lesson is that answers to the generation's questions must be prepared in advance. "And it will be that when (or if) your son asks you tomorrow..." - the Torah is telling us that it is not enough to respond to current questions; thought must be devoted to questions the future will bring, and our responses must be made ready. The disintegration that has occurred in the Jewish world since the end of the eighteenth century is due in part to a lack of preparation for the future, a lack of foresight. This phenomenon, it must be admitted, was inevitable, owing to a lack of familiarity with the outside world and with developments that were occurring in Western culture at the time. To this day religious society still suffers from a lack of foresight, and we see how political and ideological developments are greeted with complete surprise even though they could have been predicted and prepared for in advance.

Among the general population there is no shortage of "simpletons" who know not the first thing about Judaism - complete ignoramuses, who need to start at the very beginning. But there are also some who are "wicked" - those who are knowledgeable in Torah matters but are ideologically opposed to it whether on the left (Marxism and the like) or on the right (those who oppose Torah because it deflects public attention from national and social issues). "What is this service to you?" - you are laboring in things which have no significance today. The resistance to Torah grows out of opposition to the "Diaspora mentality" which is all that it symbolizes for them.

There are those whose attempts to influence these "wicked" ones revolves around the idea of the "Jewish spark" which exists even in them, but which is masked by a "shell." This is not our way. We believe that it is sometimes necessary to enter into conflict with them and to oppose them strongly - "you shall smite his teeth." We may not embrace their system and accept their ground-rules and principles in order to conduct our debate. We have to contradict their assumptions and transfer the debate from their playing field

to our own. The response to the wicked son, "It is for this that God acted for me..." is not written in the same parasha in the Torah in which his question appears. It is brought from a different parasha. Chazal transfer the debate to a different playing field, to a different parasha, with different assumptions and principles.

There is a final lesson to learn from the Four Sons: In contrast to the variety of sons, the Torah has only one father, one respondent. The Torah aspires to a situation in which one person can answer all of the questions - from the wise son who asks about tiny details; from the wicked son who is quarrelsome and aggressive; from the simple son who knows nothing but asks; and from the son who does not even know to ask. (Adapted from a speech delivered at Seuda Shelishit on Shabbat Parashat Bo 5748. Translated by Kaeren Fish.)

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Please pray for the speedy healing of Esther Miriam bat Aliza Geula, Sarit bat Esther, Sara Shifra bat Devorah, Yitzchak ben Tzivia, Refael Gershon Lipa Ben Tova Malka, Netanel ben Chaya, Devorah Esther bat Miriam, Shulamit Ariella bat Sara Imeinu, Reuvain ben Fayga, Laibel ben Chaya, and Tzvi Yehuda ben Chaya Esther.

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The Shem MiShmuel, a Chassidic Rebbe and scholar, offers a beautiful insight into an apparent contradiction in the Haggadah. The Haggadah says, "Had the Holy One, Blessed be He, not taken our forefathers out of Egypt, then we and our children and our children's children would remain subservient to Pharaoh in Egypt."

First of all, the Pharaohs are long gone, so it is unlikely that the Jewish people would have remained as servants in Egypt even had the Exodus never occurred. But in addition, if we do not wish to set this passage aside as simple hyperbole, then it appears to contradict a central element of traditional Jewish thought: that the entire world was created for Torah, to permit us to pursue spirituality and to come close to G-d. Without Torah, the world would lack all purpose. So according to the Medrash, G-d created the world with a condition in mind: "if Israel does not accept my Torah, then I will return ?all of creationX to 'tohu vavohu,'" referring to the initial state ("without form and void") mentioned at the beginning of Genesis. So had He never removed us from Egypt, then the Torah would

never have been given, and the world would have quite literally come to an end! If so, then both Pharaoh and Egypt would have ceased to exist, along with the Jews.

So the Shem MiShmuel offers an answer based (quite appropriately) on Chassidic thought. He explains that 'tohu vavohu' is not simply the absence of anything, but is rather a creation of its own, a pre-developed state. Had Israel not accepted the Torah, then the world would have returned to 'tohu vavohu' in order to emerge again, but not as a place for Torah. That

world, explains the Shem MiShmuel, would be a "bad" world, as it were, dominated by the physical, without opportunities for spiritual development, or approaches to the ultimate good found in G-d and Torah. So although human souls would exist in that world, they would have no opportunity for growth or self-perfection.

This is precisely the environment that Pharaoh sought to create for the Jews in Egypt, oppressing them with physical work and leaving them no time for other pursuits. So although those forces might appear in different garb, they would still dominate the Jews today had we not left Egypt. This is what the Haggadah means, that "we and our children and our children's children would remain subservient to Pharaoh in Egypt."

Besides the fascinating outlook on the Haggadah and our world, the Shem MiShmuel's explanation should help us to appreciate and focus up on the opportunities that we have. We are not so overwhelmed with physical work that we have no time for the spiritual. We can and must find opportunities to pursue the eternal, even in our busy lives.

Pesach is an especially good time for growth and change. "In each generation, every person is obligated to see himself as if he went out from Egypt, as it says ?in the TorahX, 'you shall tell it to your sons on that day, saying "because of what HaShem did for me during my departure from Egypt.'" Not only our forefathers did the Holy One, Blessed be He, redeem from Egypt, but even us He redeemed with them." Our Sages taught: Pesach offers us the opportunity to break free of whatever bonds have held us until now, and to grow beyond all limitations.

May we all take advantage of opportunities for growth, those that we find on Pesach, and those offered every day of the year!

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SPECIAL PESACH PACKAGE
The Four Cups of the Seder
by Rav Doniel Schreiber

I. Recitation

What is the nature of the mitzva of the four cups of wine? On the one hand, certainly, we see that there is an obligation to drink the wine.

However, the Griz (1), R. Yitzchak Zev Halevi Soloveitchik zt"l, points to the fact that Tosafot (2) seem to understand this mitzva very differently. According to the Griz, Tosafot rule that not everybody has to drink the cups to fulfill the mitzva; only the person leading the seder has to drink. If the mitzva were to drink, however, it would then be a "mitzva she-begufo" (a mitzva fulfilled by a physical act) and one person could not fulfill it for others. Rather, every individual present would have to drink his own cup. Since Tosafot rule otherwise, it is obvious that they see the mitzva as one of recitation - recitation over a cup (3).

Tosafot's basic assumption is that the mitzva of four cups is comparable to kiddush. As is well known, kiddush is not a mitzva of drinking, but rather of recitation - i.e., to say kiddush over a cup. This is evident in that kiddush does not have to be recited over wine; one can substitute bread (4). It also follows from the fact that one person can recite it for everyone else present (5). The reason that at least one person has to drink from the kiddush is merely to establish and connect the recitation to the cup.

Similarly, the nature of the mitzva of the four cups is essentially recitation - setting the Haggada to the cups (6). In other words, the phrase "four cups" is a misnomer; it actually means reciting the Haggada in four different phases, established and delineated by four cups. Thus, each cup is analogous to kiddush, except that instead of just one cup of kiddush, the seder has four cups that are analogous: recital over a cup, haggada, hallel, and birkat ha-mazon (7).

II. Drinking

In contrast to Tosafot, asserts the Griz (8), Rambam clearly understands that the mitzva is characterized by drinking. This is clear from Rambam's language, as he writes (9): "Each person must drink four cups on this night." Rambam does not deny, however, that kiddush on Shabbat is a mitzva of recitation. He admits that for kiddush, one person can recite for everyone else (10). Apparently, then, Rambam believes that the equation between kiddush and the four cups of Pesach is simply incorrect. Kiddush is a recitation; the four cups is a mitzva of drinking.

Yet, it seems difficult to deny the component of recitation as well. Indeed, the idea of amirat ha-haggada al ha-kos, i.e. setting the four cups to the order of the Haggada, would explain numerous peculiarities in this mitzva. A dramatic example of this is that there is a very definite order - seder - involved in drinking the four cups. We drink them at very specific times, and not only do we drink them at such precise intervals, but even mezigat ha-kos - pouring wine into the cups - has a separate and special order. This idea is emphasized by Rambam himself, who specifically writes the exact "seder asiyat mitzvot elu," going into detail not only when one should drink each kos, but also when one should pour each cup (11).

Although pouring and drinking the four cups at specific segments of the Seder is found in the mishna and gemara (12), the fact that Rambam cites it in such detail, and as part of the entire development of the Seder, is striking. The Rav zt"l, Maran Rabbi Joseph B. Halevi Soloveitchik, suggested (13) that Rambam did not feel that this was merely good advice, but rather part of the halakhot of seder ha-haggada. On the surface, then, it would seem to point to Rambam regarding the four cups as much more than a mitzva of drinking (14). If it was merely a mitzva of drinking, why should we care when you pour the four cups?

According to the Griz (15), another indication that Rambam recognizes a recitative aspect to the four cups can be found in a curious halakha. The gemara (16) states: If one drank undiluted wine, he has discharged his duty of wine (yayin), but not his duty of freedom (cherut). If he drank them all at once (17), he has discharged his duty of wine (yayin), but not his duty of four cups (arba kosot). What does the gemara mean that in drinking undiluted wine, one has fulfilled his duty of "yayin" but not "cherut?" Rashbam (18) explains that it means he has fulfilled the mitzva of the four

cups but not completely; it is not a mitzva min ha-muvchar (a mitzva fulfilled in the best possible way) because it does not taste good. It seems then that "cherut" is not a very basic halakha; the mitzva has been fulfilled, only not in the ideal manner. What does the gemara mean that in drinking the cups in one shot, one has fulfilled "yayin" but not "arba kosot?" Rashbam (19) explains that it means one has fulfilled the general mitzva of simchat yom tov, but not mitzvat arba kosot, since he did not drink the four kosot al ha-seder.

Rambam (20), however, has an entirely different text of the gemara (21). According to his version, the gemara reads as follows: If one drank undiluted wine, he has discharged his duty of arba kosot, but not his duty of cherut. If he drank them one after the other, he has discharged his duty of cherut, but not his duty of arba kosot.

Clearly, according to this version, it is difficult to explain "cherut" as merely an additional level to the fulfillment of drinking four cups. If that were the case, how can one fulfill "cherut" but not "arba kosot?" Rather, "cherut" and "four cups" seem to be two independent aspects of the mitzva of the four cups. The Griz explains that according to Rambam, there are two halakhot in arba kosot. One is a halakha of drinking, and thus Rambam rules every person must drink. Rambam, however, does not deny the existence of a second halakha, namely, amira al ha-kos - reciting a text over a cup. Both aspects are part of the mitzva.

Accordingly, the term "cherut" refers to the drinking, and the gemara means that arba kosot were established derekh cherut, i.e. to drink them in a way which symbolizes one's freedom. Thus, explains the Griz, if one drinks undiluted wine in the proper order, although he fulfills "arba kosot," i.e. sippur yetziat mitzrayim, he does not fulfill "cherut," since he did not drink them in the manner of freedom. It is for this reason that posekim (22) consider one who becomes ill from drinking arba kosot exempt from the mitzva. Moreover, Rambam's identification of "cherut" with drinking is consistent with his opinion that the drinking fulfills the obligation "to act as if one is actually leaving Mitzrayim now." (23)

On the other hand, the term "arba kosot" refers to the mitzva of sippur yetziat mitzrayim, namely the halakha of amira al ha-kos. Thus, according to Rambam, if one would drink the kosot, one after the other, although he has fulfilled drinking, he has not fulfilled "arba kosot," namely amirat sippur yetziat mitzrayim al ha-kos. This is because he did not drink arba kosot in the proper order, and thus did not integrate arba kosot into the whole story.

Rambam understands, then, that arba kosot has a dual goal. On the one hand, drinking wine demonstrates our new found cherut - our physical freedom from harsh servitude in Egypt, and our spiritual elevation realized by kabbalat ha-Torah. On the other hand, the story of our exodus from Egypt must be recounted in a majestic, ritualized ceremony, crowned by four recurrent kosot shel berakha.

III. Arba Kosot and Sippur Yetziat Mitzrayim Both Tosafot and Rambam agree that the primary mitzva of arba kosot, or least one of the most important motifs, is amira al ha-kos - recitation - and not just drinking. Is this aspect entirely one of sippur yetziat mitzrayim, or is sippur only part of the amira al arba ha-kosot? Arba kosot has four stages of recitation - kiddush, haggada, hallel, and birkat ha-mazon. If it can be established that each stage of amira al ha-kos entails sippur yetziat mitzrayim, then by definition amira al ha-arba kosot is sippur yetziat mitzrayim, and is a mitzva of pirsumei nisa - publicizing the miracle.

The Rav zt"l explained how the four stages of amira al ha-kos entail sippur yetziat mitzrayim (24) in the following manner (25). The least problematic of the four stages is obviously the second one - maggid. Maggid, which we recite over the second cup, is clearly sippur yetziat mitzrayim. Even the fourth stage, singing Hallel over the fourth cup, can easily be defined as sippur yetziat mitzrayim. For example, Rambam, in his

Sefer Ha-mitzvot (26), includes praising Hashem for redeeming us from Egypt, and for all the good that He has bestowed upon us, within his definition of sippur yetziat mitzrayim (27).

What is more difficult to explain, though, is how the first and third cups - kiddush and birkat ha-mazon - are a *kiyum* in sippur yetziat mitzrayim. The Rav zt"l suggested (28) that first, one can consider the reference to the exodus in kiddush as sippur yetziat mitzrayim (29). Moreover, Rambam (30) writes that discussing Bnei Yisrael's status, as the chosen people and the mekablei Torah, qualifies as sippur yetziat mitzrayim (31). Thus, the recitation of "asher bachar banu me-kol am, ve-romemanu me-kol lashon, ve-kideshanu be- mitzvotav" in kiddush is itself sippur yetziat mitzrayim. Similarly, in birkat ha-mazon, we say "ve-al she-hotzeitanu me-eret mitzrayim, u-peditanu me-beit avadim...ve-al toratkha she-limadetanu." It is for this reason that kiddush and birkat ha-mazon qualify as sippur yetziat mitzrayim, and were established as part of arba kosot.

IV. Arba Kosot: Centerpiece of the Seder (32)

It is thus clear that arba kosot is a mitzva of *pirsumei nisa*, accomplished through retelling the story of our exodus from Egypt (33). Moreover, as noted above, according to Rambam, *cherut* is also a critical component of arba kosot, and fulfills the obligation "to act as if one is actually leaving Egypt now (34)." What emerges, is that both the recitation and drinking elements of arba kosot are mitzvot of *pirsumei nisa*. Arba kosot, then, is a mitzva entirely devoted to *pirsumei nisa*.

Furthermore, arba kosot is not merely a mitzva of *pirsumei nisa* amongst other mitzvot of the Seder night. Arba kosot is so animated by the motif of sippur yetziat mitzrayim, and so dramatically parades the theme of *cherut* - freedom - that Chazal established arba kosot as the centerpiece and hub of the entire Seder. The most conspicuous example of how the Seder revolves around the arba kosot is, as noted above, the halakha of pouring and drinking the wine of arba kosot during specific periods of the Seder.

If arba kosot is merely a halakha of drinking wine, prescribing the exact times to fill the cups and drink them would not make any sense at all. However, since *amira al ha-kos* and demonstrating *cherut* are fundamental components of sippur yetziat mitzrayim, it is necessary to implement specific times of performance. Pouring and drinking the arba kosot, at significant phases of *amira*, interweave the arba kosot into the whole fabric of the Haggada. Integrating the arba kosot with the Haggada is important, because that is precisely the definition of arba kosot: they are the embodiment of haggadat sippur yetziat mitzrayim. The Rav, zt"l, once proposed implementing two suggestions which further accent arba kosot's identification with, and centrality to, haggada (35). He suggested that in order to fuse arba kosot with *amirat ha-haggada*, perhaps one should hold the cup in one's hand during the entire recitation of the Haggada, just like we do for kiddush (36). Moreover, since haggada is *amira al ha-kos*, the Rav zt"l asserted that one should refrain from being *mafsik* - interrupting - throughout the entire *amirat ha-haggada al ha-kos*. Saying anything other than matters directly relating to the Haggada (37) would be tantamount to talking in the middle of kiddush, and would invalidate the unity of the recitation. These suggestions sharply underscore arba kosot's status of haggada and *pirsumei nisa par excellence*.

V - Conclusion

Arba kosot, then, does not simply entail drinking four cups of wine. It is both a demonstration and articulation of sippur yetziat mitzrayim. As the centerpiece of the Seder night, it assumes the stature of quintessential haggada - wholly devoted to illustrating and broadcasting the miracle of our exodus. It is clear, therefore, that arba kosot is not merely an example of *pirsumei nisa*; it is rather the pre-eminent mitzva - the paragon - of *pirsumei nisa*.

Endnotes:

(1) Hilkhhot Chametz U-matza, 7:9. (2) Pesachim 99b, s.v. Lo Yifchetu. See also Tosafot, Sukka 38a, s.v. Mi. (3) On closer inspection, however, it is not at all obvious that Tosafot consider one to be *totzei* if he himself did not drink from the arba kosot. In fact, Tosafot suggest being *machmir*, requiring that each person to drink arba kosot. (4) Shulchan Arukh, Orach Chaim, 272:9. Based on Tosafot, if one did not have wine, it is possible, as shall be noted, that one could substitute matza for the arba kosot, like we do for kiddush on Shabbat. This will be discussed in greater detail in part III of "The Seder Night," *be-ezrat Hashem*. (5) Orach Chaim, siman 371. (6) Indeed, Tosafot in Sukka 38a (s.v. Mi) explicitly state this point. (7) The Griz apparently takes Tosafot's parallel literally. R. Zvi Pesach Frank (Mikraei Kodesh, Pesach, pp. 101) understands Tosafot differently. According to R. Frank, mitzvat arba kosot is incumbent upon the household, like *ner chanuka*, and thus one person can be *motzei* the others. He suggests further that perhaps since arba kosot and *ner chanuka* are essentially mitzvot of *pirsumei nisa*, one act of *pirsumei nisa* in front of the household fulfills everyone's mitzva. (8) Griz, *ibid*. (9) Hilkhhot Chametz U-matza, 7:7. (10) Hilkhhot Shabbat, 29:7. (11) Hilkhhot Chametz U-matza, 8:1-2. (12) Pesachim 114a and 116a. (13) *Siach ha-Grid*, by R. Yitchak Lichtenstein, shlita, 1995, pp. 13-15. (14) See also Rambam, Hilkhhot Chametz U-matza, 7:10, where he seems to emphasize that arba kosot are *kosot shel brakha*. See also Ramban, Pesachim 117b. (15) Griz, *ibid*. (16) Pesachim 108b. (17) The definition of "drinking all in one shot" is a *machloket* Rishonim. Either it means drinking one big *kos*, or, as the majority of Rishonim explain, it means drinking all four *kosot* one after another instead of their proper place in the Haggada. (18) Pesachim, *ibid*. (19) Pesachim, *ibid*. (20) Hilkhhot Chametz U-matza, 7:9. (21) See similarly Rif, *ibid*. (22) See Arukh Ha-shulchan, Orach Chaim, 472:14, and Mishna Berura, siman 472, note 35. Sha'ar Ha-tzion, note 52, states explicitly that the exemption is based on the fact that this is not *derekh cherut*. (23) Hilkhhot Chametz U-matza, 7:6-7. Although the particular act of *shetiyat arba kosot* is only a mitzva *de-rabanan*, it fulfills the mitzva *min ha-Torah* to act out our leaving mitzrayim. This is accomplished in *shetiyat arba kosot* specifically by drinking *derekh cherut*. Indeed, this is the import of the gemara in Pesachim 117b which states: "Arba kosot were established *mi-derabanan derekh cherut*." (24) See also gemara Pesachim 108a which, in discussing *heseiba* for arba kosot, highlights the sippur yetziat mitzrayim motif in arba kosot. (25) See *Siach ha-Grid*, pp. 9-11, and 37-38. (26) *Mitzvat ase* 157. (27) See also Sefer Ha-chinukh (mitzva 21). See also Ran (Megilla, 7a in the pages of the Rif, s.v. *Ve-khen Be-hallel*) who writes that according to R. Elazar ben Yakov who rules that the *korban pesach* may only be eaten until *chatzot*, one must recite Hallel before *chatzot*. Apparently, Ran understands that sippur yetziat mitzrayim is conditioned upon *akhilat korban pesach*, and that Hallel is part of sippur yetziat mitzrayim. Moreover, the gemara in Pesachim 36a establishes matza as "*lechem she-onin alav devarim harbei*," and Rashi (s.v. *She-onin*) explains that "*devarim harbei*" means Hallel and haggada. Also see Tosafot in Sukka 38a, s.v. Mi, who explicitly connect Hallel with haggada. (28) *Siach ha-Grid*, pp. 9-11. (29) See also Rabbeinu Peretz, cited in Rabbeinu Yerucham, *netiv chamishi*, *chelek daled*. (30) Hilkhhot Chametz U-matza 7:4. (31) This is so since the whole purpose of yetziat mitzrayim was to select Bnei Yisrael and give them the Torah. See Bemidbar 15:41, and Sefer Ha-chinukh, mitzva 306. See also Ibn Ezra, Shemot 13:8. (32) The following important nuance, in the nature of mitzvat arba kosot, was described in a shiur delivered by mo"v Rabbi Michael Rosensweig shlita on the 11th of Nisan, 5746, and again on the 29th of Adar, 5750. (33) Had arba kosot been just a halakha of *shetiyat*, and not a mitzva of *pirsumei nisa*, then the principle of "*af hen*" could not apply. This might be one reason to argue that "*af hen*" should not apply to *akhilat matza*, assuming

matza is purely a mitzvat akhila. However, R. Zvi Pesach Frank (Mikraei Kodesh, Pesach, pp. 101) explains that even without a din of amira al ha-kos, a mitzvat shetiya could create enough pirsumei nisa to fulfill the mitzva. (34) See Rambam, Hilkhos Chametz U-matza 7:6, and compare it with the mishna in Pesachim 116b. (35) Also related by Rabbi Rosensweig in the above shiur. (36) See also the gemara in Berakhot 51a, and Rambam, Hilkhos Shabbat, 29:7, that one must grasp a kos shel berakha in one's right hand, and lift it a tefach from the ground. See similarly Shulchan Arukh, Orach Chaim, 183:4. (37) This presumably means one can say divrei Torah, since that is part of sippur yetziat Mitzrayim.

Ohr Sameach Highlights of the Weekly Torah Portion Shabbos Hagadol
Haftora for Shabbos Hagadol: Malachi 3:4-24

The Shabbos immediately before Pesach is called Shabbos Hagadol -- or the

Great Shabbos. It commemorates the day in Egypt that the Jews each took a sheep, the Egyptian deity, and tied it to their bedposts, informing the Egyptians that their god was about to become an offering to Hashem. In spite of their fury, the Egyptians were powerless to act, although the Jews did not know this at the time. Rather, they acted out of trust of Hashem and Moshe, His prophet. Thus the Shabbos immediately before the first redemption was a day when the faith of the Jewish People was rewarded with Hashem's protection. (Adapted from the Artscroll/Stone Chumash)

"Behold! I send you Eliyahu the prophet before the great and awesome day of Hashem." (7:3)

The night of Pesach is called "A night of guardings", when the Jewish People are guarded from their enemies. "A night of guardings" also implies that this night, the night of Pesach is 'guarded' - set aside for all time - as a night on which the final redemption can come. In other words, every year, the night of Pesach has in it the power of redemption, that it has the ability to bring forth the actual from the potential. Shabbos also has this ability to express and crystallize the latent power of the week that follows it. Therefore, every Shabbos Hagadol contains the power of the redemption from Egypt, already awakened in this Shabbos is the force of "the great and awesome day of Hashem".

(Maharal)

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"Jeffrey Gross <75310.3454@compuserve.com>" "Halachic Topics
Related to the Weekl.. HALACHA FOR 5756COPYRIGHT 1996
SELECTED HALACHOS RELATING TO PARSHAS TZAV-SHABBOS
HAGADOL

By Rabbi Doniel Neustadt

A discussion of Halachic topics related to the Parsha of the week.
For final rulings, consult your Rav.

Thirty days before Pesach the Halachos of the Yom Tov should be reviewed... (Shulchan Aruch OC 429:1)

Taanis of the Bechorim

QUESTION: Who is considered a Bechor in regard to Taanis Bechorim on Erev Pesach?

DISCUSSION: Concerning Taanis Bechorim, any first born male who is over thirty days old, whether first-born to his father or to his mother, is considered a Bechor. A first-born of a Kohen or a

Levi is considered like any other Bechor in regard to Taanis Bechorim(1).

The status of a Bechor born by caesarean section(2), or of a first-born Gentile who converts(3), is a matter of disagreement among the Poskim. It is therefore recommended that these Bechorim participate in a Seudas Mitzvah and thereby satisfy all opinions(4).

QUESTION: Must the Bechorim attending the Siyum actually hear the Masechta being completed? Must the Bechorim partake of the food at the Siyum?

DISCUSSION: It has become customary for the Bechorim to exempt themselves from fasting by participating in a Siyum and eating what is served: The Bechorim gather around the person who is concluding the Masechta and listen as the Masechta is completed. Food is then served and eaten by the participants(5).

If a Bechor did not hear the Masechta being completed, or if he did not understand what was said at the Siyum, or if he is an Avel (a mourner during the first seven days after a relative's death) who may not learn Torah, some Poskim rule that it is as if he did not participate in the Siyum and he therefore may not eat(6). Other Poskim are more lenient(7). Some Poskim recommend that such a person participate in the Siyum by sharing the expense, by preparing the food, etc.(8).

The same difference of opinion applies to one who hears the Masechta being completed but does not partake of the food being served. Some Poskim rule that a minimum of approximately 2 fl. oz. of food or drink(9) must be consumed at the Siyum meal in order for a Bechor to exempt himself from fasting. If that minimum amount is not eaten, then it is considered as if the Bechor has not participated in the Siyum(10). Other Poskim are more lenient and rule that eating at the Siyum is not mandatory at all. As long as one heard the Masechta being completed, one may eat at any time thereafter(11).

An analysis of the above discussion yields the following conclusion: There is a basic dispute among contemporary Poskim as to which element of the Siyum is the one which releases the Bechor from his obligation to fast. Some reason that the main element is the completion of the Masechta itself. Consequently, actually hearing and understanding what is being said is mandatory; partaking of the food is secondary. The other view holds that participation in the Siyum is the element that releases the Bechor from the fast. Consequently, the primary consideration is to join in the meal. Listening to and understanding what is being said is not mandatory.

It follows, therefore, that one can safely rely on either of the above two opinions. One cannot, however, rely on a combination of both views, since they contradict each other in their basic understanding of what a Siyum accomplishes. One who did not hear or understand the actual Siyum, must partake of the Siyum meal. One who is unable to partake of the meal, must hear and understand what is being said. But one who did neither - who did not hear or understand nor partake of the meal - has not exempted himself from the fast.

Obviously, in order to fulfill the requirements of all the Poskim, one should L'hachila listen and understand the proceedings, and partake of the Siyum meal.

NOTE: Many of these Halachos, but not all, pertain to Siyumim conducted during the Nine Days. In regard to certain points, the Halachos of Siyumim in the Nine Days are more stringent.

FOOTNOTES:

- 1 Mishna Berura 470:2
 - 2 See Chok Yaakov 470:2; Kaf Hachayim 470:3.
 - 3 Shevet Halevi 8:117.
 - 4 Harav Y.S. Elyashiv (Seder Ha'aruch vol. 3 pg. 44).
 - 5 Mishna Berura 470:10.
 - 6 Ben Ish Chai (1:96-25); Chazon Ovadia (pg. 99); Harav S.Y. Elyashiv (Siddur Pesach K'hilchaso pg. 168)
 - 7 Minchas Yitzchok (9:45); Harav M. Shternbuch in Teshuvos V'hanagos (1:300) quoting the Steipler who says it is customary to be lenient in this matter, provided that the participant is sincerely "happy" with the Siyum taking place. See also the lenient ruling of Harav Y.Y. Fisher concerning a mourner (Pnei Boruch pg. 463). Harav M. Feinstein is also quoted as being lenient (Moadei Yeshurun pg. 132).
 - 8 Minchas Yitzchok, ibid.
 - 9 A Koseves for solids or M'lo Lugmov for liquids - otherwise it is not considered as if he broke his fast (see OC 568:1.)
 - 10 Minchas Yitzchok, ibid, Chazon Ovadia (pg. 99); Teshuvos V'hanagos 1:300.
 - 11 Harav S.Y. Elyashiv, ibid; Shu"t Dvar Yehoshua 2:81.
Bedikas Chometz
- QUESTION: Should ten pieces of Chometz be hidden throughout the house before Bedikas Chometz?
- DISCUSSION: The Poskim differ in their views regarding this practice. There are four basic approaches:
- 1) The Rema (OC 432:2) states that the custom is to hide pieces of Chometz around the house before the Bedika. Since it often happens that no Chometz is found during the course of the Bedika, the Bracha over the Bedika could possibly be a Bracha L'vatalla. To avoid this eventuality, one would be required to hide some Chometz before the Bedika begins.
 - 2) Although L'chatchila pieces of Chometz should be hidden, The Rema himself holds that if they were not, the Bracha would nonetheless be valid, for the Mitzva is to search for Chometz, even in the event that one does not find any.
 - 3) Many Poskim(1) hold that one need not be concerned about a Bracha L'vatallah at all and one need not hide any Chometz before the Bedika.
 - 4) Some Poskim(2) hold that the practice of hiding Chometz should be abandoned. They are concerned that some pieces may be lost or overlooked, with the result that Chometz will remain in the house over Pesach.

Mishna Berura agrees with the Poskim who are not concerned about the possibility of a Bracha L'vatallah. He nevertheless states that it is not proper to discontinue a long-standing Jewish custom(3). Indeed, the majority of homes today observe this time-honored practice(4).

Nowadays, there is an additional reason for maintaining this custom. The Halacha demands that the home be thoroughly searched during Bedikas Chometz. Any place into which Chometz may have been brought during the year must be checked. In many homes, however, the Bedikah has become merely ritualistic, taking but a few minutes with no serious search conducted. A reason why the Bedikah has become perfunctory is that today, homes are thoroughly cleaned and scrubbed for days or even weeks before the Beddika. Consequently, most people assume that no Chometz will be found and are satisfied with going through the motions. Although there is a possible justification (Limud Zchus) for

people who conduct such a perfunctory Bedika(5), many other Poskim do not agree with this leniency and require that a proper Bedika be conducted.

In order to satisfy the views of all Poskim, it is recommended(6) that one hide Chometz around the house before the Bedika. Since the searcher (Bodek) is aware that there definitely is some Chometz to be found, he will necessarily have to conduct a proper Bedika. Therefore:

Unless one has a custom to the contrary, ten(7) pieces of bread should be hidden in various places around the house before the Bedika begins.

Care must be taken that the pieces are wrapped well so that no crumbs will escape. Only hard pieces should be used. The exact location of the pieces should be recorded and carefully checked. Upon concluding the Bedika the pieces must be properly discarded(8).

Each piece should be smaller than 1 fl. oz(9).

The custom has evolved that the pieces are hidden by household members who are not going to be searching the house(10). However, the searcher himself may also hide the pieces(11).

Some Poskim(12) rule that a person who is leaving home for Pesach and therefore conducts his Bedika in advance of the 14th of Nissan without a Bracha, need not hide pieces of Chometz.

FOOTNOTES:

- 1 The Gra, Chayei Adam, Chok Yaakov quoting the Raavad.
- 2 Taz, quoted by Shaar Hatzion 432:11.
- 3 There are also additional reasons - especially according to Kabbalah - for Minhag Yisroel.
- 4 Chok Yaakov, S.A. Harav, Kitzur Shulchan Aruch and Aruch Hashulchan all note this custom.
- 5 See Shaarei Teshuva OC 433:11 (also quoted by Kaf Hachayim) who says that the masses do not conduct a through check since they rely on the cleaning process done before the Bedika. In his view, this may be relied upon even if a professional non-Jew did the cleaning. See Chochmas Shlomo (433:11) and Daas Torah (433:2) for similar rulings.
- 6 Ruling of Harav S.Y. Elyashiv (quoted in Seder Ha'aruch Vol. 3, pg. 27-28). See also Chok Yaakov 232:14 and Machzik Bracha 232 who advance a similar idea.
- 7 This is the custom, based on the Arizal, quoted by the Mishna Berura.
- 8 Mishna Berura 232:13-14.
- 9 Shaarei Teshuva 432:7. Together, though, all the pieces should total at least one oz. - See Orchos Rabbeinu quoting the Steipler.
- 10 See Chok Yaakov 232:14.
- 11 Orchos Rabbeinu reports that this was what the Steipler did. Seder Ha'aruch quotes Harav Elyashiv as ruling that the Bodek can hide the pieces himself.
- 12 Minchas Yitzchok 8:35. See Kinyan Torah 2:82 who disagrees.

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Providing for the Needy: Pesach Perspectives

In Orech Chayim 429:7, the Aruch HaShulchan writes: "All of the nation of Israel has the custom (in the month of Nissan) to collect 'Ma'os Chittim' - to purchase flour for the poor for Pesach, or to give them money so they can

purchase it for themselves."

The custom of contributing "Ma'os Chittim," literally "money for wheat," is widespread. Not only do we contribute money to provide for the flour (and therefore Matzos) of the poor, but to provide as well for all the needed Pesach provisions. While providing this assistance is important, of equal importance is how the assistance is provided. We must do all that we can to assure that the recipients of the Ma'os Chittim are not embarrassed by their destitute situation. In order to avoid the embarrassment, many communities or congregations have Ma'os Chittim funds, where a contributor gives the money to the fund, and only those responsible for disbursing the funds know the identity of the recipients. That way, a recipient never knows who is providing him with the charity, thereby reducing any potential for embarrassment.

There is a story about Rabbi Chaim Ozer Grodzenski of Vilna (1863-1940) that vividly illustrates the concern we must have for the feelings of the recipients of the charity which we give.

In Vilna, Rabbi Grodzenski's concern and actions done for the welfare of the community, especially the poor, were well known. After prayers on the night of the Seder, a man approached Rabbi Grodzenski, who was standing in the front of the synagogue. He quietly told the Rabbi that he and his family had just arrived in Vilna that morning. He therefore had absolutely no provisions for Pesach, and he was hoping the Rabbi could help him out. Rabbi Grodzenski wanted to help this man out in a manner that no one would be aware of the man's personal situation. Rabbi Grodzenski pretended that this man had just come to ask him a Halachic question. In a booming voice, he said "Its not Kosher. I'm sorry, but all that you prepared for Pesach cannot be eaten. It is not Kosher." People standing around the Rabbi heard this "decision." They felt sorry for this man, who they assumed had prepared a complete Pesach feast, only to be told that he cannot eat any of it. Immediately, the man began receiving offers of food and supplies from all the congregates. He was able to have a complete Pesach celebration without having to ask others for food, and without anyone knowing of his desperate situation.

(Stories adapted from the book Bircas Chayim)

---R' Yehudah Prero

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Subject: YomTov: Searching for Chametz Within

YomTov, vol. II, # 2

Week of Parshas Vayikra

Topic: Searching for Chametz Within

Of all the commandments associated with Pesach, there is one that, due to the severity of its transgression, stands out from all the others. On Pesach, one is not permitted to have in one's possession any "Chametz," leaven substances. One can not eat or own bread or any product that is leaven during Pesach. The only "flour" product permitted is Matzo, a cracker-like bread made from a dough consisting of only flour and water, which is not allowed to rise. In order to assure that our homes are Chametz - free for Pesach, we go through extensive cleaning and preparing, to assure that not even a crumb of

Chametz will be found or seen during Pesach.*

Our Sages have told us that Chametz and the preparations associated with it are extremely symbolic. Chametz represents the evil within us, our Yetzer HoRa - our Evil Inclination. It represents all of our character flaws such as haughtiness, jealousy, unbridled passion and lust. Just as we need to remove every speck of Chametz from our household, so too we need to remove every speck of spiritual Chametz from our beings. Just as much time and effort is expended on preparing ourselves physically for Pesach, by removing any hint of Chametz, we must also exert much time and effort on preparing ourselves spiritually for Pesach, by working on improving our character, which is accomplished by removing all the evil traits we unfortunately carry with us.

One would think that these self improvement efforts would be more appropriate in preparing for Rosh Hashanah or Yom Kippur, the holiest days of the year on which we are judged for either life or death. Why is such extensive introspection and spiritual improvement needed now, before Pesach?

The great sage Shammai taught (in Avos 1:15) "Say little and do much." In the tractate of Berachos, we find the teaching of Rav Meir, said by Rav Huna: "Aman's words should always be few in addressing G-d." These directives by our sages to "cut down" on speaking seem to be disregarded come Pesach. We find that the Torah tells us "And you should tell to your children (about the departure from Egypt)...." We find in the Hagada "All that increase their telling about the departure from Egypt - this is praiseworthy!" In fact, we even find that the name of the holiday itself relates to speech: Pesach is a combination of the two words "peh sach," "the mouth speaks." Why, come Pesach, are we all of the sudden ignoring the directives of our sages to minimize our speech?

As we said above, Chametz represents the bad within us. As long as we carry this "Chametz" within us, we might value ourselves for more than we are truly worth. Our haughtiness blinds us into thinking that we are better people than we really are. We do not want to recognize our faults. We act like we are righteous, although deep in our hearts we know that we are not. We act like we are sincere, although we know that we really are not. This is always a problem. However, it is a huge problem come Pesach. We tell our children at the Seder about the miracles of G-d and how we are to appreciate them. Do we really appreciate them? We relate to our children all of the lessons we are to learn from the slavery and the redemption. Have we learned anything from these lessons? Are our children going to believe us when we try and impart these messages, or will they shrug it off and brand us as hypocrites? Furthermore, we spend a large part of the Seder thanking G-d for saving us and singing His praises. Do we really appreciate what G-d has done for us? Is our thanks and praise sincere? While we might appear devout to others, G-d knows the truth. He is not interested in people singing empty praises to Him. He is not interested in lip service. He is not interested in hearing thanks from fools, those who think they can pass themselves off as that which they are not.

How do we make sure that we are not confronted with these serious problems on Pesach? We must be sure that we spend a proper amount of time before Pesach preparing ourselves spiritually for the holiday. We must remove the Chametz from within us, the Chametz that causes us to appear as righteous when we are not. We have to be sincere in our relationship with both G-d and our fellow

man. If we do not rectify the flaws in our character before Pesach, if we do not remove the Chameitz before Pesach comes, we will meet with disaster. Neither G-d nor our children will listen to what we have to say. However, if we improve our character, we overcome our jealousy, we control our passions, we humble our egos, we will be properly prepared to speak meaningful words from the heart on Pesach. G-d will appreciate our praises and our children will learn from us. It is for this reason that self-improvement before Pesach is of the utmost importance. Once we have prepared ourselves for this occasion, we can speak freely, as our Sages tell us "All who increase their telling about the departure from Egypt, they are praiseworthy!"

(From Sefer HaToda'ah)

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The Evil Son and the Importance of Unity

The Hagada speaks about the famed "Four Sons:" The Wise son, the Evil Son, the Simple Son, and the Son who does not know how to ask. The dialogue of the evil son is particularly interesting. The Hagada Says: "The Rashah (The wicked son) - What does he say? 'Of what purpose is this service to you?' To you (he said), (implying) and not to himself. Because he took himself out of the community, he has denied the basic principles. Therefore, you should strike his teeth and tell him 'Because of this, G-d did this for me during my departure from Egypt.' For me, and not for him. And if he was there, he would not have been redeemed."

Why is the evil son so bad? Why are his comments considered "heretical?" Furthermore, what is the unusual response of striking his teeth supposed to accomplish? In order to get a fuller appreciation of this dialogue, it is necessary to understand the true meaning of the conversation. Therefore, a little background information is needed.

Our forefather Yaakov was the father of the 12 Tribes of Israel. We find in the Torah that Yosef, Yaakov's favorite son, was not liked by his brothers. Yosef had dreams about how he would be in an elevated position over his brothers, which he related to his brothers. These revelations combined with other factors that our Sages discuss caused a large rift between Yosef and his brothers. Yaakov was not oblivious to this rift. Indeed, he knew that Yosef distanced himself and was distanced from his brothers, and he attempted to ameliorate the situation.

We find in Bereshis (37:11-14) that the brothers were tending to their father's flocks in the city of Shechem. Yaakov sent Yosef to check on his brothers. The language that Yaakov used to request this of Yosef is odd. He told Yosef "To check on the peace of your brothers and the peace of the sheep." Why did Yaakov give this lengthy order, when he could have simply stated "Check on the peace of your brothers and the sheep?"

The answer is that Yaakov was telling something more to Yosef than to just check on his brothers' well being. There are two types of "peace." There is a type of peace which is merely an absence of war. People do not necessarily get along, nor care for each other. However, as long as one does not bother the other, all is well. This is contrasted to a vastly different type of peace. It is a true peace, where people care for each other. People more than just co-exist with each other: They live together as a community, a collective whole where all are concerned for each other's benefit, and where cooperation is the norm, not an exception, not a burden. Sheep are a perfect example of the former type of peace. One sheep does not necessarily care for the others in the flock. As long as any specific sheep gets its food to eat,

it will not bother any other sheep. Sheep co-exist with each other. The brothers of Yosef, on the other hand, demonstrated the latter type of peace. They lived together in a unit, caring for each other's needs, concerned for each other's welfare. The brothers lived in a harmonious unit, a unit which typified the peace we long for.

Yosef, by acting in the ways he did, was distancing himself from his brothers. His relationship with his siblings was like that between sheep: as long as Yosef did not bother his brothers, they did not bother him, and vice versa. Yaakov knew that it was of utmost importance that this change. Yosef had to realize that he had to make himself a part of the whole. He could not be content with his status as an individual, separate from his brothers. He had to realize how important unity was, and act on this realization. In order to point out to Yosef that his behavior was not as it should be, Yaakov told Yosef "Go, look at the peace of the sheep. See how they act towards each other. That is how you are acting towards your brothers, and it is wrong! How should you act? Go see the peace of your brothers! They are truly a unified group, where care for each other is of utmost concern. That is how your relationship should be with your brothers!"

The Torah tells us that by this point in time, it was too late for Yosef to rectify the situation. His brothers sold him into slavery. This sale was the first link in the chain of events that lead to our slavery in Egypt. By the time we were taken out of Egypt as a nation, we had rectified the situation. The Torah points this out when the nation of Israel was camped by Mount Sinai

not long after the departure. The Torah, when saying that the nation was camped, uses the singular verb "va'yichan" - "and he camped," instead of the proper verb of "va'yachanu," "and they camped." Why the odd choice? To tell us that the entire nation was one - like one person, with one heart. We have to assure that our relationship with our "brothers" is one of unity. Without unity, our nation will not survive.

It is because of the importance of unity that the question of the Rashah is deemed "heretical." The Rashah stresses that he is not part of the rest of the nation. He is not interested in what everyone else is doing. He is for himself. It is this type of attitude that dooms our nation. The Rashah has taken himself out of the community. By separating himself, he is illustrating that he does not care for the rest of the nation, nor for the nation's continued existence. So how does striking his teeth help? The Hagada tells us that the nation of Israel while in Egypt was as numerous as grass. Why the comparison to grass, as opposed to other "numerous" objects, such as the stars and sand? The Leil Shimurim writes that individual blades of grass have no value. Only with the combination of countless blades is there any significance to the grass. The same is true with the nation of Israel. The greatness of the nation of Israel is their unity. Teeth as well are only of value as a group. One tooth does not help a person much. We therefore "strike

the teeth" of the Rashah - to illustrate to him that just as a few scattered individual teeth are not of much value, so too he, by separating himself from the nation, is of insignificant value. Just as teeth need each other to work properly, so too the nation of Israel needs all brothers and sisters working together.

Without unity, our status as a nation is in jeopardy. At this time of the year, we should do all that we can to increase the unity between our sisters and brothers, thereby strengthening our nation, the nation of Israel.

(Based on the thoughts of Rabbi Michel Twerski of Milwaukee, Wisconsin.)

---R' Yehudah Prero

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Pesach

Selected, translated and arranged by Rabbi Dov Rabinowitz

The month of Nissan is the time of our redemption, and the festival of Pesach is the time of our freedom.

The Haggadah states: "If HaKadosh Boruch Hu had not taken our fathers out of Mitzraim, we and our children and our children's children would be subjugated to Paroh in Mitzraim."

Rav Dessler (in Michtav Me'Eliyahu vol. 2) elaborates:

Every topic and every object has an inner essence; one who observes according to this inward perspective, discerns the whole topic, and in particular its spiritual kernel.

The subject of our exile, when viewed casually, appears primarily as a physical redemption. But one who observes the spiritual essence, perceives the physical exile as merely the corollary; the real cause is the exile of the soul i.e. that the soul is under the domination of his evil inclination.

And this is the approach of our Sages with regard to the exile, when they instituted the wording of the blessing "Asher Ge'alanu" in the Haggadah: "... For our redemption, and for the deliverance of our souls."

The Chidushei HaRi"m points out that just as every Jew has to remove all the chometz and impurity from his home, and to clean and purify all his possessions, so he has to eliminate from within himself all the contamination and impurity which have accumulated during the course of the year, in honor of the festival of Pesach. This is what our sage were alluding to when they explained the possuk: "And Moshe called all the elders and said to them: Draw and take for yourselves flocks ..." (Shmos 12,21) - Draw yourselves away from idol worship, and take for yourselves flocks for the mitzvah of the Pesach sacrifice.

Haggadah: Blessed is He who keeps his promise to Israel. Blessed is He. For HaKodush Boruch Hu reckoned the kaitz (final time of the redemption) ... For your descendants will dwell in a land which is not theirs ... And they will afflict them ...

The Gaon of Vilna explains this in the light of the words of Chaza"l about the possuk "At it's time, I will hasten it's arrival" (*****).

For when HaShem determined and set a limit to the period of the exile, He did not specify from which time the reckoning would begin. If Yisroel merit, the time is reckoned from an earlier stage, and the time of the exile finishes sooner. This is the concept of "I will hasten it's arrival."

And if the do not merit, it is reckoned from a later time.

This is why the Haggadah states: "Blessed is He." For HaKodush Boruch Hu reckoned the period of 400 years which He decreed for the exile (Bereishis 15,13) immediately from the time when He spoke to Avraham Avinu.

For your descendants will dwell in a land which is not theirs: This was another act of great benevolence which HaKadosh Boruch Hu did for us to reckon within the 400 years, the period when "your descendants dwell in a land which is not theirs."

And they will afflict them: This refers to the 86 years of affliction, which began from the time when Miriam was born. This is why she was called Miriam (from the root mar - bitter) for then began the period of "and they will

make their lives bitter."

All of these stages together make up the 400 years. The period in Mitzraim

was only 210 years. There were thus 190 years, which were not spent in Mitzraim, "missing" from the 400. Now 190 is the gematria of 'kaitz.' This is the implication of "HaKodush Boruch Hu reckoned the kaitz" - He reckoned

the kaitz (190) years which were spent in other lands of exile as part of the 400 years, in order to hasten the redemption.

Pesach - Matza - Maror

Selected translated and arranged by Rabbi Zahavie Green

The Tiferes Yisroel explains, in his commentary on the Mishna in Pesachim (10:5), the spiritual equation relating these three things to the redemption from Egypt.

There were three obstacles to the Jews being redeemed from Egypt. The first was from their side, in that they were sinning against Hashem just like the Egyptians. As it states in Shemos Rabba, The angles said to Hashem: "The Egyptians worship idols and the Jews worship idols; what is the difference between them. In Sanhedrin (103b) it teaches that Micha crossed the Red-sea with his idol on his back. In fact, Datan and Aviram, and their whole rotten crowd were there, all of whom were filthy with the abominations of Egypt, the ancient sleaze capital of the world. In a phrase, the Jews were like their spiritual step mothers, i.e. like a fetus in the womb. one and the same; and thus they were unfit to be redeemed. The second obstacle had to do with timing. The decree stood from the time of Avraham that the jews were to serve in Egypt for four hundred years, yet only two hundred and ten had passed. The third obstacle arose from the reality of their being enslaved and oppressed under the hand of the most powerful and harsh nation in the world, to the degree that they were unable to even contemplate escape. How then could the Jews hope to emerge from under the claws of this man-eating lion?

However, Hashem, in his great kindness reversed these three obstacles into spiritual engines obstacles into reasons for our hastened redemption in such a manner that each accelerated the other. Because the Jews were so sunk in idol worship they had to be quickly saved before they had fallen to the fiftieth step of impurity. Furthermore, because of the need for taking them out earlier, the Egyptians treated them even more harshly in order to complete the measure of enslavement, making up in quality what was missing in quantity.

In light of the above, the Torah commanded us to mention three things as a spiritual counterpoint. The Pesach - because by all rights the Jews should have been destroyed along with their masters from whom they were no different; yet Hashem spread his wings of mercy over them, and they were spared. The Matza - because the dough had no time to sour before Hashem appeared to save our ancestors, i.e. it had to baked before the normal allotted time. Similarly the Jews, under their unceasing inhuman bondage, didn't have the wherewithal or time to "rise" to serving Hashem; therefore, in consideration of the fact that they might have fallen to a sub-spiritual level of non-redeemability, Hashem had to quickly save them and take them out before the time of the decree. The Maror - because of the embittering of our ancestors lives. Just as maror is bitter like a snake which bites the tongue, yet is healthy for the body in that it helps dissolve hard to digest foods in the stomach; so also the Egyptian enslavement was evil and bitter, but it was ultimately healthy and good in that it enabled the Jews to quickly digest the four hundred year decree in only two hundred and ten years. (NOTE: The same is true today.)

Mordecai Kornfeld <kornfeld@netmedia.co.il>"" Intriguing glimpses into the 7th of Pesach 5756 - "To rejoice or not to rejoice?"

rejoicing in the enemies' death. Nor was it proper, in CASE #3, for the angels to sing praise to Hashem while our Egyptian tormentors were being drowned.]

(Gemara, Sanhedrin 39b)

II

The Gemara tells us that Hashem Himself does not rejoice when the wicked are destroyed. However, He does encourage joy on the part of man. Why is that? The words of the Gemara may be explained as follows.

In Yechezkel 18:23 we read, "Do I desire the death of the wicked man?" asks Hashem. 'It is the return of the wicked man from his evil ways that I desire, so that he might live!' Hashem prefers for a person to repent, and realize his full potential, rather to see him destroyed due to his sins. Thus, when the time comes to punish the evildoers, it is not an occasion for rejoicing for Him. However, for those who were threatened by the evildoer and now find themselves delivered from harm, it is appropriate to rejoice. One is certainly expected to express his thanks before Hashem for His beneficence.

We may add to the words of the Gemara, that even in those very cases (#2, #3) that the Gemara quotes to prove that Hashem does *not* rejoice at the downfall of the evildoers, this dichotomy is evident. Although Yehoshaphat's singers (CASE #2) omitted a few words of praise, they nevertheless *did* sing other praises to Hashem for the victory of which they were assured. Only the phrase "for it is good [in His eyes]," which carries the implication that what has happened is good *in the eyes of Hashem*, was omitted. Similarly, at the splitting of the sea (CASE #3), the Bnai Yisrael, who had just been miraculously saved from certain death at the hands of their Egyptian pursuers, *did* break out into song (Shemot 15). Only the angels on high were reprimanded when they attempted to sing Hashem's praises, for there was no joy *before Hashem* at that time.

III

The Gemara's approach may thus be summed up concisely as follows: Hashem does not rejoice when the wicked are punished, but He does expect the beneficiaries of the wicked person's destruction to rejoice. However, the Maharsha (Berachot 9b, Sanhedrin 39b) quotes a Midrash which seems to contradict this thesis. The Midrash says as follows:

We ought to recite the joyous Hallel prayer (Psalms 113-118, which are recited in the morning prayer on holidays) all seven days of Pesach, just as we do so all seven days of Sukkot. Yet we only recite it on the first day! (The abridged, "half" Hallel that we recite nowadays on the last six days of Pesach and on Rosh Chodesh is only a custom, unlike the Rabinnically ordained, mandatory "whole" Hallel recited on "full" festivals.) Why, then, don't we recite Hallel all seven days of Pesach? Because the Egyptians were drowned in the Sea on the seventh day of Pesach, and Hashem said, "Although they were My enemies, I wrote in My Scriptures (Mishlei 24:17), 'Do not rejoice at the downfall of your enemy.'"

(Yalkut Shimoni, Mishlei, end of 2:960; Pesikta deRav Kahana, end of #29. [See also Erchin 10a, where the Gemara gives an entirely different reason for not saying Hallel on the last six days of Pesach.]

According to this Midrash, even we Jews, who were saved from the hands of the Egyptians, should refrain from showing joy (by reciting Hallel) at the downfall of the Egyptians! How, asks the Maharsha, can this be reconciled with the assertion of the Gemara quoted above, that Hashem *does* expect others to rejoice when the wicked are destroyed? The Maharsha leaves this problem unanswered in Berachot, while in Sanhedrin he proposes two possible solutions, both of which are very difficult to reconcile with

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This week's Parasha-Page is dedicated to the memory of my father's aunt, Mrs. Gitli Marmorstein, who passed away on the 20th of Nisan. More a grandmother than an aunt, she and her husband raised my father after his parents were killed during the Holocaust.

*** Would you like to dedicate a future issue of Parasha-Page and help support its global (literally!) dissemination of Torah? If so, please let me know. Contributions of any amount are also appreciated. Help spread Torah, using the farthest reaching medium in all of history!

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Seventh day of Pesach [The day of the splitting of the Red Sea] 5756 TO REJOICE OR NOT TO REJOICE?

(CASE #1) "The shout ('Rinnah' - also meaning 'shout of joy') went out in the camp [after the wicked King Ahab had been killed in battle]" (Melachim I 22:36). Rav Acha bar Chanina said: The verse says, "When the wicked perish there are shouts of joy ('Rinnah')" (Mishlei 11:10). This is the reason why there were shouts of joy when Ahab son of Omri perished.

[The Gemara then asks:] Does Hashem truly rejoice in the downfall of the wicked? Does it not state (Divrei nHayyamim II 20:21), "The singers went out before the front line of fighters [of the army of Yehoshaphat, on their way to war with the Moabite army] saying, 'Praise Hashem, for His mercy is forever!' " -- and Rabbi Yonatan (CASE #2) asked, Why are the words "for it is good [in His eyes]" omitted here? (That is, the full text of this familiar verse of praise, as quoted in Tehillim 106:1, ibid. 118:1, ibid 118:29, ibid. 136:1, and Divrei Hayyamim I 16:34, is "Praise Hashem, *for it is good [in His eyes]*, for His mercy is forever." The only instance where the intermediate section of this phrase is omitted is the one at hand. -MK) It is because Hashem is not happy at the downfall of the wicked (such as the Moabite army, that Yehoshaphat was about to conquer and destroy. The phrase, "For it is good [in his eyes]," would have implied that Hashem rejoiced in the demise of the Moabite army, while that was not actually so - Rashi, loc. cit.)

Similarly, Rav Shmuel bar Nachman (CASE #3) said in the name of R. Yonatan, what is the meaning of the verse "They did not approach each other throughout the entire night [of the splitting of the Red Sea]" (Shemot 14:20)? It means that the angels in Heaven wanted to sing praises to Hashem at the time of the splitting of the Red Sea, but Hashem held them back, saying, "The works of My hands [= the Egyptians] are drowning in the sea, and you want to sing praises before Me?!" [We thus have two sources to show that Hashem does *not* rejoice when His creations expire.]

[The answer is that indeed] Hashem does not rejoice at the downfall of the wicked; He does, however, cause *others* to rejoice. [This is why, in CASE #1, the *Jews* rejoiced at the death of Ahab. It was others that were rejoicing, but not Hashem Himself. However, in CASE #2, it was not proper for the singers of Yehoshaphat to mention that Hashem, too, is

the words of the Midrash itself. (See also Tzlach, to Berachot 10a and 51b, who suggests some rather forced solutions for this problem.)

We may add that there is an even more obvious problem with this Midrash. If it is considered inappropriate for the Jews to praise Hashem for vanquishing the Egyptians, then why did they sing the Az Yashir song (Shemot 15) upon that occasion? Furthermore, how is it that we recite this same song of praise as part of our daily liturgy -- even on Pesach -- to this very day?

Perhaps we may suggest a very simple, original answer to these problems, as follows. There is a basic difference between the song of Az Yashir and that of Hallel. In Hallel, we repeatedly recite (three times, or, according to Ashkenazic custom, six times when recited with a congregation), the verse "Praise Hashem, for it is good [in His eyes], for His mercy is forever." The phrase "for it is good" is precisely the expression that the singers of Yehoshaphat found it necessary to omit, as explained above (CASE #2). It is these words which imply that Hashem is pleased with what has occurred. If so, perhaps the Midrash means that specifically the praise of *Hallel*, with its implication of Divine pleasure, is an inappropriate form of thanksgiving on this occasion. Az Yashir, however, which contains no such implication, is an entirely appropriate expression of praise on this occasion! The Midrash that the Maharsha quotes is now identical to CASE #3.

Our former conclusion, thus still remains valid. Hashem does not rejoice when the wicked are punished, but He does expect the beneficiaries of the wicked person's destruction to rejoice.

IV

Upon further examination, however, we find other Midrashim which seem to suggest that there is joy *even before Hashem Himself* upon the destruction of sinners.

QUOTE: There is joy before Hashem when the wicked perish, as it says "When the wicked perish there are shouts of joy" (Mishlei 11:10). And it says further, "May sinners be terminated from the world and wicked people cease to exist; praise Hashem, O my soul!" (Psalms 104:35).

(Bamidbar Rabba 3:4).

QUOTE: There is joy before Hashem when the kingdom of the evildoers is uprooted from the world.... There is joy before Hashem when the wicked are removed from the world [such as when the following people perished: King Herod, the generation that served the Golden Calf, Yoav ben Tzeruyah; Avshalom son of King David].

(Megillat Ta'anit, Chs. 3,9)

(Our question from Megillat Ta'anit Ch. 3 is also raised by the commentary Tosafot Chadashim loc. cit., who leaves his question unanswered.

See also Agra L'yesharim, by HaGaon Rav Chaim Zimmerman, Ch. 20.)

Further research reveals that these difficulties are actually dealt with by a very early source -- the Midrash HaZohar. The Zohar tells us the following:

QUOTE: There is no joy before Hashem which compares to the joy that exists when the wicked are destroyed, as it says "When the wicked perish there are shouts for joy." You may ask, have we not learned the opposite -- that

there is no joy before Hashem when he punishes the wicked!

The answer to this question is that either joy or sadness may be appropriate, depending on the circumstances. When Hashem punishes the wicked after their "measure is full" (i.e. when they have been given every last opportunity to repent, and rejected them all -MK), He rejoices in their demise. But when He punishes them before their "limit" has been reached... instead of rejoicing, there is sorrow before Him.

You may ask, why would Hashem destroy people before their time has

come? The answer is that sometimes the wicked bring upon themselves a premature end.... When the evildoers pose an immediate threat to the Jewish nation, Hashem finds it necessary to destroy them without delay. When this happens, Hashem is not pleased with the premature destruction of the wicked. Such was indeed the case when the Egyptians were drowned in the Red

Sea (CASE #3), and when Yehoshaphat's armies conquered the forces of Moab (CASE #2).

(Zohar, Noach 61b; see also Shelah, Parashat Beshalach)

According to the Zohar, then, the general rule is that Hashem *is* happy to eliminate the evildoers. It is only when circumstances dictate that the wicked be removed from the world "ahead of schedule" that there is sorrow, rather than joy, before Him. This only occurs when the Bnai Yisrael are faced with immediate danger, and Hashem saves them from imminent death at the expense of the enemy. Such was the case when the Egyptians were drowned in the Red Sea, and when the armies of Moab were destroyed by the Yehoshaphat's fighters.

The reason for this dichotomy is clear. As we have explained before (section II), Hashem would rather see the evildoer mend his ways, than have him destroyed. This is why Hashem allows a person plenty of time to repent, even after the person sins. However, even this merciful reprieve has its limits. A person's time to be taken from this world eventually arrives. At that point, the demise of the sinner is beneficial for both the sinner himself (who will be able to sin no longer), and the world at large (which will no longer be able to learn from the evil ways of the sinner) -- Mishnah, Sanhedrin 71b. The destruction of the wicked sanctifies the Holy Name of Hashem. When the time for the destruction of the wicked has come, there *is* joy before Hashem.

Combining the Zohar and the Gemara, we may now summarize as follows: The beneficiary of Hashem's grace should always rejoice when the forces of evil that had threatened him are destroyed. Hashem Himself also rejoices when the wicked are eliminated. However, when they are eliminated before their due time, He does not rejoice!

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YomTov, vol. II # 6

Week of Parshas Sh'mini

Topic: The Last Days of Pesach

The Torah, when speaking about Pesach, tells us that "...and on the seventh day (of Pesach), it should be a holy day to you, all manner of work should not be done..."

Pesach is a seven day holiday. Those of us who live in the Diaspora, however, observe Pesach for eight days. The reason why we tack on an extra day stems from the times when the new moon was proclaimed by a court (see YomTov I:

52). Because there was a worry that those living outside of Israel would not know which of two possible days was the first of the month, holidays which carried with them a prohibition against working were observed for two days. We continue this tradition to this very day, and that is why there is an eighth day of Pesach outside of the land of Israel.

Unlike the last day of Sukkot (see YomTov I:48), the last day of Pesach is not a separate holiday. It is merely the conclusion of Pesach. It is for this reason that we do not recite the blessing of "Shehechyanu" "Who has kept us

alive," by candle lighting and by Kiddush as we usually do on a holiday.

We find no association in the Torah between the last day of Pesach and any event or occurrence in our nation's history. In truth, a miraculous event occurred on the seventh day of Pesach. After the Jews left Egypt, Pharaoh had

a change of heart. He started pursuing the nation of Israel. The nation had reached the shores of the Yam Suf (popularly translated as Red Sea, more accurately translated Reed Sea) and could travel no further. On the day that we celebrate the seventh day of Pesach, G-d split the Yam Suf, so that the Jews were able to cross the sea on what was miraculously dry land. After the Jews crossed the sea, the waters came tumbling down upon the Egyptians, who

were still in hot pursuit of the Jews. The Egyptians were drowned, and the entire nation of Israel was saved. This event would seem fitting for commemorating with a holiday such as the seventh day of Pesach. Yet, not only is this event not celebrated, but the day that it occurred on is not even mentioned in the Torah! Why is such a monumental day in our history passed over?

The Sefer HaToda'ah writes that the Jews were only given holidays by G-d that celebrated the salvation of the Jews. They were never given holidays that commemorated the downfall of their enemies. G-d does not celebrate the downfall and destruction of the wicked, as they are His creations. Therefore, the Jewish nation as well does not celebrate the downfall and destruction of the wicked. It is for this reason that there is no connection made between the splitting of the Yam Suf and the seventh day of Pesach. We cannot celebrate the downfall of the Egyptians. However, the Jews indeed were saved

on this day, and sang songs of praise and thanks, Hallel, to G-d for their salvation. We too sing Hallel to G-d on this day, just as our forefathers did. We can and do mark the occasion of our salvation. We cannot and do not,

however, mark the occasion of our enemies' demise.

Mo'adim L'Simcha, R' Yehudah Prero
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"Naftoli Biber <bibern@tmxmelb.mhs.oz.au>" Discussion of a Halachic topic
Matzo Shmura - "Guarded" Matzo

Issues in Practical Halacha
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MATZO SHMURA - "GUARDED" MATZO

Three aspects of the mitzva of matzo shmura ("guarded matzo") are discussed here:

- i. The mitzva of guarding the matzo
- ii. The time of the guarding
- iii. Guarding "for the sake of the mitzva".

The Mitzva of Guarding the Matzo

The Rambam writes, "Since the verse states 'And you shall guard the matzos'- that is, be careful with matzo and guard it from any kind of leavening - the

Chachomim said that one must be careful with grain from which one eats on Pesach, that no water should come upon it after it has been harvested, so that there should not be in it any leavening whatsoever."

That is to say, it is insufficient to establish that the matzo has not become chometz; rather, it requires a specific guarding for this purpose.

This guarding must be intended for the sake of fulfilling (with this matzo) the mitzva of eating matzo on Pesach. If the matzo were not guarded with this intention, one has not fulfilled with it the mitzva of eating matzo.

Matzo shmura is required only for the matzos eaten in fulfillment of the mitzva of eating matzo on the seder nights. The matzos eaten on the other days of Pesach do not need to be specifically shmura (guarded).

The Chok Yaakov writes, however, that the Jewish people are holy and are accustomed that all the matzo they eat during Pesach are shmuros.

The Biur Halachah states that the Gra was very stringent to eat only matzo shmura throughout Pesach.

The Shaalos u'T'shuvos Maharshag cites the P'ri Chodosh as saying that there is no basis for the stringency to eat matzo shmura all of Pesach. He adds, however, that the P'ri Chodosh lived in Egypt where the rainfall was limited to a specific season, and there was no fear that rain would fall on unguarded grain. In "our" regions, he continued, rain could fall at any time, so that there was a basis for "our" stringency to eat matzo shmura throughout Pesach. Many in fact have this custom.

The Birkei Yosef interprets the Rambam and Rif as requiring matzo shmura all the days of Pesach according to halacha (and not merely as a stringency).

The Time of Guarding

The Gemora concludes, after a discussion, that the guarding of the matzos has to be "from the outset", that is, already prior to kneading the flour with water. The meaning of "from the outset" is the subject of a dispute amongst the Rishonim.

According to the Rambam and the Rif, this means from the time of harvest of

the grain. For, from that time, if water will fall on the grain, it can become chometz; whereas standing, unharvested grain can become chometz only when the grain has ripened fully and dried out completely.

For the Rosh and the Sh'iltos, however, the guarding need begin only from the time of milling (grinding the grain) - for then the grain is in the proximity of water, since the mills are driven by water.

According to this reason, the Mogen Avrohom notes that where the mills are driven by donkeys or by the wind, guarding would not be required from the time of milling.

The halachic ruling of the Shulchon Oruch is that it is "good" to guard from the time of harvesting, and "at least" from the time of milling.

The P'ri Chodosh states that the guarding must be from the time of harvesting and without this one has not fulfilled one's obligation even in extreme circumstances.

The Sha'arei T'shuva writes that the Noda Biyehudah stated that this applies only to those observing the greatest hidur (m'hadrin min ham'hadrin) in the mitzvos; but the Sha'arei T'shuva notes that many have adopted this stringency (of using matzo guarded from the time of harvesting), at least with the matzo used to fulfil the mitzva of eating matzo on the Seder nights.

The Shulchon Oruch states that, in extreme circumstances, one may even use flour from the market place and guard it merely from the time of kneading.

In explanation of the last ruling, the Taz and Mogen Avrohom state that "we do not presume issura [that something forbidden is present]". However, as the Mogen Avrohom states, where the practice is to wash the flour, it is

forbidden to use it for matzo even in extreme circumstances.

The Mishnah B'rura states that this is in fact common practice nowadays.

He

further adds that it is forbidden even to keep such flour in one's house inasmuch as this constitutes transgression of the negative commandment "There shall not be seen to you any chometz... in all your boundaries".

Guarding "for the sake of the mitzva"

The Gemora states that on Pesach "one may fill one's stomach with the dough [products] made by non-Jews provided that one eats a k'zayis of matzo at the end."

Rashi explains this, that even where we see that these dough products made by non-Jews were kept from becoming chometz we nevertheless require, for the matzo eaten in fulfilment of the mitzva, that it have been guarded for the sake of the mitzva. For this reason matzo guarded against becoming chometz by a non-Jew is not acceptable, since a non-Jew is taken not to have had in mind the mitzva. Similarly a mentally infirm (shota) or deaf mute (cheresh) Jew or a Jewish child (under bar mitzva) is unacceptable for guarding the matzo since their understanding (da'as) is not adequate.

The Taz, however, qualifies this by saying that if a child can understand when we say to him that he should do something for the sake of a mitzva which Hashem has commanded then his guarding is acceptable, even though he is not yet thirteen years old. The Chok Yaakov argues that the boy must be thirteen years old.

Not only with regard to the guarding (supervision) but also to the actual making - the kneading and the baking - of the matzos does the above apply: the matzos are to be made for the sake of the mitzva and so may not be made by a non-Jew, or a Jewish cheresh, shota, or child - even with the supervision of an ordinary adult Jew.

As to whether the actual performance of the preliminary stages from harvesting (or from milling according to the Rosh) must be done - as distinct from being supervised or guarded - for the sake of the mitzva there are differing opinions.

The Taz writes that just as the guarding (supervision) must be for the sake of the mitzva, so too must be the actual performing of the tasks involved in making the matzo. He writes, however, that before kneading (i.e. from harvesting or milling) the guarding is required only in order that the grain should not become chometz (not positively for the sake of the mitzva). (Accordingly, it is sufficient that a non-Jew perform these tasks and a Jew supervise him.) Whereas, from kneading onwards, the positive intention for the sake of the mitzva is also required in the guarding and so too in the making. (Accordingly, only an adult Jew could actually knead or bake the matzos.) The reason for this distinction is that the essential making of the matzos is the kneading and baking so that these require positive intention, not the earlier stages which are merely a preparation for it.

The P'ri M'gadim observes in the unqualified statement of the Rashbo that there is a requirement of "guarding for the sake of the mitzvah", that no such distinction is made and all stages require this positive intention for the mitzva, unlike the distinction made by the Taz. He notes, however, that the view of the Rif would seem to support the Taz.

The Chasam Sofer queries why there should be any need to say that the making

of the matzos - as distinct from the guarding (supervising) - has to be for the sake of the mitzva. The verse mentions only guarding. He concludes that this indeed is the case (that only the guarding need be performed for the sake of the mitzva): it is sufficient that a non-Jew do the actual harvesting or grinding (with the supervision of a Jew).

The reason why Shulchon Oruch nevertheless requires that a Jew do the actual

kneading and baking is because from this stage water is added to the flour and the guarding against any leavening can only be performed by the person occupied with the actual making of it, therefore a Jew is required for this. In the case of harvesting and milling a Jew can supervise to see that no water comes from elsewhere upon the grain which another - a non-Jew - is harvesting.

With regard to the perforation (the rolling of holes) made in the matzo, the Taz rules that all of the tasks involved in making the matzos (including this) have to be through an adult Jew.

The Chok Yaakov writes that he saw that the custom is to be lenient to allow

children to perforate the matzos under the supervision of adults and found it desirable inasmuch as a greater number should assist in - to hasten- the making of the matzos. Nevertheless, with regard to the matzos used for the mitzva, one should see to it as far as possible that children not be involved.

In extreme circumstances, as in the case of one who cannot attain proper shmuro matzos (and cannot make his own matzos), the Taz and Mogen Avrohom write that one may rely on Rav Hai Gaon, who permits making matzos - even for the mitzva - through a non Jew, provided that a Jew stands by and reminds him to make them for the sake of Pesach. (The Mogen Avrohom states that if a Jewish child is available for this purpose, it is preferable that the child do it, rather than the non-Jew).

Even though the supervision and making of the matzos for the mitzva could be performed by others, nevertheless according to the principle that it is preferable to perform a mitzva oneself than through an agent, Shulchon Oruch states that one should strive to be involved personally in producing the matzo shmuro.
