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INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON PESACH - 5770

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Subject Rabbi Frand on Parsha

Rabbi Yissocher Frand on Parshas Tzav

Matzah: The Bread of Affliction and the Bread of Redemption

The reasons given for eating matzah on the night of the seder are somewhat paradoxical. On the one hand matzah is the bread of affliction that our fathers ate when they were slaves in Egypt (i.e. - the poor slaves did not even have time to let their dough rise due to the oppression of their cruel taskmasters.) On the other hand, we eat matzah because their deliverance came upon them so suddenly that their dough did not even have time to rise before they had to hurry out of Egypt. The Ramban in his Torah Commentary [Devorim 16:3] points out this dual nature of matzah's symbolism. It is the bread which symbolizes the enslavement and it is the bread which symbolizes the redemption.

This is rather strange. Imagine, for 200+ years the slaves were thinking "Oh, what would I give for a piece of soft bread!" For centuries they were salivating over the luscious white bread the Egyptian taskmasters were eating. Bread would have been the appropriate thing to symbolize the redemption! Such was apparently not the Divine Plan. The Almighty said "The same matzah that you ate as a slave, now you eat as a free person."

The message in this is that in order to be a free person, we do not need anything. If a person specifically needs "bread" as opposed to matzah to consider himself free, then he is not a free person. A person who NEEDS the physical pleasure of bread to give him his sense of freedom is not really free. Rather, he is a slave to his physical needs.

The Master of the Universe emphasizes that freedom has nothing to do with externals. It is entirely a phenomenon of one's internal awareness. I can eat the same piece of matzah that I ate as a slave and also eat it now as a free person. This is true freedom. A friend of mine in the rabbinate once posed the following question to a group of teenagers: What would you prefer - to be poor and happy or rich and unhappy? The unanimous response was to be rich and un happy. They, unfortunately, did not even

understand the question. They could not comprehend why they might be unhappy if they were rich.

The truth of the matter is that the less encumbered one is, the less one needs, the more happy he can be. That is why the bread of redemption could not be rye bread or white bread. It had to be the same matzah they ate as slaves.

This idea is not only taught at the time of Pesach, it is characteristic of Succos as well. Succos, of all the Festivals, is called "The Time of Our Joy" (Zman Simchaseinu). On Succos, we leave the comforts of our home and move into a flimsy little hut. Furthermore, the libation one brings on Succos is not wine (as is the case with all other libations) but is water.

To be happy, a person should not need to retire to a flimsy Succah. To be happy, a person should go out and have wine libations as we do the entire year. The answer is the same. In order to achieve Simcha [joy], the Torah is demonstrating that a person can go out into the flimsy Succah. He does not need the comforts of his home. True happiness does not need externals. It does not even need wine - water will do just fine!

In the prayer after the Priestly Blessing that we say on the holidays, we say "May it be Your Will... that You give me and all the souls of my household our food and sustenance generously and not sparsely ...from beneath Your generous Hand, just as you gave a portion of bread to eat and clothing to wear to our father Jacob...". There seems to be something wrong with this prayer. We are asking for generous sustenance ... like that provided to Yaakov who was given bread to eat and the shirt on his back to wear? Why don't we ask for sustenance like that given to Shlomo HaMelech [King Solomon]?

The answer is that indeed, what Yaakov had was generous sustenance. Yaakov was 100 percent satisfied with the material blessings he was given. This is all he ever asked for [Bereshis 28:20] and he was happy with it. Generous sustenance (parnasa b'revach) is never related to the amount. It is based on what satisfies the person. This is what we pray for - that we should be as free as Yaakov Avinu was free, namely by being happy with a piece of bread to eat and a single item of clothing to wear. May we all have a Happy and Kosher Pesach.

Transcribed by David Twersky Seattle, WA; Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman, Baltimore, MD RavFrand, Copyright © 2007 by Rabbi Yissocher Frand and Torah.org.

from Rabbi Chanan Morrison <ravkooklist@gmail.com> reply-to ravkook-list+owners@googlegroups.com to Rav Kook List <Rav-Kook-List@googlegroups.com> subject [Rav Kook List]

Rav Kook List Rav Kook on the Torah Portion **Pesach: "Because of This"**

After commanding us to commemorate the date we left Egypt, the Torah also instructs us to transmit these memories to the next generation.

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

Memories for All Generations

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

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

elevated impressions of those miracles, drawing from them their great light and holiness.

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

(Adapted from Olat Re'iyah vol. I, p. 39)

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<http://www.torah.org/learning/edutainment/5769/pesach.html>
Edutainment Weekly

By Jon Erlbaum

Edutainment Weekly (torah.org)

4 Seder Cups & 1 Yiddische Cup (Insights for Passover)

THE 4 CUPS OF... MILK?

What does it mean for a person to possess a "Yiddische Cup" (a "Jewish head" or "Jewish way of thinking" – which, by the way, does not necessarily imply that every Jew thinks this way or that Jews have a complete monopoly on thinking this way!)? The following story on the four Seder cups can fill us up with a truly liberating lesson on this always timely topic. A woman once approached the Rabbi of the city of Brisk, Rabbi Yosef Dov Soloveitchik, with a strange question. She wanted to know whether one could use milk instead of wine for the four cups of the Seder, since she simply couldn't afford the wine. He responded by giving her a large amount of money. Asked the Rabbi's wife, "I understand you gave her money because she can't afford the wine, but why so much?" The Rabbi explained, "If she wants to drink milk at the Seder, it is obvious she has no meat for Pesach" (since there is a Rabbinic prohibition against eating meat and milk together at the same meal). "So I gave her enough to buy wine and meat for the entire holiday."

THE WISE SON & "WARM" REASONING

In my humble opinion, we have just read a classic story about what it means to be the Wise Son. The Rabbi in this story is known to have been a great Jewish scholar, who gained a masterful mental dexterity through his immersion in Talmudic thinking. Now the Talmud is famous – among many other things – for beckoning its explorers to recognize subtleties and fine distinctions, engage in solid logical deductions, and attune themselves not only to what is being said but even to what is not being said. The question is, when people subject themselves to careful, calculated reasoning, how will that analytical power translate into human interactions? Will it lead them to coldly react to another person's plight through a flight of philosophical fancy, or will it lead them to find resourceful ways of warming to the task?

THINKING OUTSIDE THE VOICE BOX

Our well-rounded Rabbi of Brisk has elegantly pointed us down the path that true wisdom should lead us to follow. Delving into the depths of Torah and Talmudic waters can elevate us in an infinite number of ways. But among the top priorities of its refining power is that it can teach us to hear what people are truly saying behind their words – thereby enabling the listener to discern the speaker's true needs and respond accordingly with acts of kindness.

When wisdom is used to serve the purpose of kindness, then the primary goal of wisdom is achieved. When the mind passes its knowledge through the channels of the heart, then a primary goal of humanity is achieved. In light of these concepts, we are now equipped to address our original query: who is the one with the true "Yiddische Cup"? The one who uses his or her chachmah for chesed (wisdom for kindness)!

Have a Wonderful & Liberating Pesach! Love, Jon & The Chevra
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genesis@torah.org to weekly-halacha@torah.org subject Weekly Halacha
- Parshas Terumah by Rabbi Doniel Neustadt (dneustadt@cordetroit.com)
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Weekly Halachah

Rabbi Doniel Neustadt (dneustadt@cordetroit.com)

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Pesach Questions and Answers

When the Beis ha-Mikdash was standing, the only roasted meat permitted to be eaten on the Seder night was the meat of the Korban Pesach. Nowadays, although the Beis ha-Mikdash is no longer standing and we no longer eat the Korban Pesach, we still do not eat any roasted meat on the two Seder nights.

"Meat" includes meat from any animal which requires shechitah (ritual slaughter), including chicken and turkey. Roasted fish, however, is permitted.¹

"Roasted" includes any type of roasting, including pot roast.² Even if the item was cooked first and then roasted it is forbidden. But if it was roasted and then cooked it is permitted according to most poskim. A minority opinion forbids that as well.³

Fried, barbecued, broiled over an open fire or smoked meat is considered like roasted meat and is forbidden.⁴ Liver, which is broiled, is not eaten on the Seder night.⁵ If the broiled liver was then cooked, it is permitted according to most poskim mentioned earlier.

Some families do not eat roasted meat during the daytime Yom Tov meals either, but most people do not follow this custom nowadays.⁶

Based on the above, it is important to remember that at the Seder, it is forbidden to eat the roasted zeroa which is placed on the Seder Plate. But it is permitted to eat the zeroa during the daytime meal. In any case, the zeroa should not be discarded, as it is considered a bizyaon mitzvah to do so,⁷ and one should make sure that it is eaten at an appropriate time.

Question: What is the proper blessing over matzah brei?

Discussion: There are three methods of preparing matzah brei and the blessing will depend on the method used:

If the matzah brei is deep fried – the matzah is submerged in oil – the blessing is mezonos, followed by al ha-michyah. Even if one were to eat a large quantity, he would not be required to recite birkas ha-mazon.

If the matzah brei is pan fried – in little or no oil – it should be eaten only during a meal in which matzah is eaten.

If, before pan-frying the matzah brei, one boils the pieces of matzah in water for as little as a minute, then the blessing is mezonos, followed by al ha-michyah.

Kneidlach, latkes, chremzil and Pesach cakes made with cake meal or matzah meal are all mezonos, followed by al ha-michyah.

The proper blessing over Pesach cakes or latkes made from potato starch is shehakol. B'diavad, if one made an ha-adamah over them, that will suffice.⁸

The blessing over egg matzah⁹ (made with either fruit juice or eggs but no water), which may be eaten on Pesach only by a person who is ill or elderly and cannot eat regular matzah,¹⁰ is mezonos followed by al ha-michyah. This is considered a bread-family product, so if one eats it as part of a full meal, then it is considered like regular matzah and would require ha-motzi and birkas ha-mazon.

Question: Is it permitted to put matzah in boiling hot soup on Shabbos Chol ha-Moed?

Discussion: It is permitted to do so since soup bowls are considered a keli shelishi, and there is no prohibition of "cooking" a baked item in a keli shelishi.¹¹

Question: What should be done if some edible chametz is found in one's house or workplace during Pesach? Discussion: If the chametz is found on Shabbos or Yom Tov, then it should be covered with a utensil or a towel, etc.¹² The chametz, which is considered severe muktzeh, should not be moved at all, not even with one's feet or body.¹³

If the edible chametz is found on Chol ha-Moed, it should be disposed of immediately.¹⁴ If possible, it should be burned.¹⁵ If this is not possible, then it should be flushed down the toilet or crumbled and thrown to the winds or cast into a river. Although one is fulfilling the mitzvah of tashbisu by disposing of the chametz, no berachah is recited at this time.¹⁶ Question: On Chol ha-Moed, is it permitted to play word or board games which require writing down the words or the score? Discussion: Yes, it is permitted. Playing board games is an enjoyable activity that many people engage in for recreation, and in order to spend quality family time together. Thus it is a legitimate festival need and writing is permitted, as it is permitted for any other Chol ha-Moed need.

Still, it is appropriate to deviate slightly from the regular writing style that is normally used during the rest of the year.¹⁷

Question: Is it an obligation or a mitzvah to drink wine on every day of Chol ha-Moed?

Discussion: The mitzvah of Ve'samachta be'chagecha, rejoicing during the holiday, applies to Chol ha-Moed just as it applies to Yom Tov. Nowadays, when the Beis ha-Mikdash is no longer standing and we cannot rejoice by eating the meat of the sacrifices, we can rejoice only by drinking wine.¹⁸ It is, therefore, a requirement for every person to drink at least 3 fl. oz. of wine [within 3-4 minutes] on each day of Chol ha-Moed.

Contemporary poskim debate whether or not one can fulfill this mitzvah with non-alcoholic grape juice. Some hold that grape juice is just like wine concerning this halachah,¹⁹ while others hold that grape juice is invalid for this purpose.²⁰

But the mitzvah applies only to those who enjoy the taste of wine or grape juice and rejoice when they drink them. Those who do not enjoy the taste of wine or grape juice and do not rejoice when partaking of them, are exempt from drinking these beverages. It is for this reason that the poskim write that women are not obligated to drink wine on Chol ha-Moed, since many women are not accustomed to drinking wine and do not rejoice when drinking it.²¹

1 Mishnah Berurah 476:9. 2 Mishnah Berurah 476:1. Aruch ha-Shulchan 476:2, however, questions why pot roast should be forbidden. 3 Peri Chadash, quoted by Be'er Heitiv 476:1, Sha'ar ha-Tziyun 2 and Kaf ha-Chayim 4. 4 See Ha-Seder ha-Aruch 95:5. 5 Aruch ha-Shulchan 476:4. 6 See Sha'arei Teshuvah 473:2. 7 Chayei Adam 130:6. 8 Entire Discussion based on Halichos Shelomo 3:10-8, 9. 9 Including: Egg Matzah Crackers, White Grape Matzah, White Grape Bite-Size Matzah Crackers, Passover Tam Tam Crackers and Passover Tiny Tams. 10 Rama, O.C. 462:4. See Igros Moshe, O.C. 4:98. Note that even the ill or elderly cannot fulfill their obligation to eat matzah at the Seder with this type of matzah. 11 Orchos Shabbos 1:42. 12 Mishnah Berurah 446:6. Our discussion assumes that one recited Kol chamira right after the bedikah and on erev Pesach after burning the chametz, or on at least one of those occasions. 13 Although generally it is permitted to move even severe muktzeh with one's feet or body, here it is prohibited because we are concerned that one will forget that it is Pesach and will inadvertently eat the chametz; See Teshuvos Lehoros Nasan 5:30. 14 Note that we are referring here only to chametz which has not been sold to a non-Jew. If one specifically intended to sell all of his chametz, known or unknown, to a non-Jew, then he need not dispose of the chametz. He must, however, place the chametz among the items that were sold to the non-Jew; see Mikra'ei Kodesh, Pesach 1:74-2. 15 Mishnah Berurah 445:6. 16 Mishnah Berurah 535:5. 17 Based on Mishnah Berurah 545:35. 18 O.C. 529:1 and Beur Halachah, s.v. keitzad; Mishnah Berurah 530:1. 19 Rav Y. Kamenetsky (Emes l'Yaakov, O.C. 529:1); Rav S.Z. Auerbach (Shulchan Shelomo 529:3); Rav N. Karelit (Mevakshei Torah, Yom Tov 29:2). 20 Rav M. Feinstein (Zichron Shelomo, pg. 33); Rav M. Stern (Zichron Shelomo, pg. 42); Rav Y.S. Elyashiv (Mevakshei Torah, Yom Tov, pg. 454-26). One may dilute the wine with some grape juice as long as the alcoholic wine taste remains dominant; ibid. 21 See Sha'agas Aryeh 65; Maharshah, Nedarim 49b, s.v. ela; Zichron Shelomo, pg. 2.

Rabbi Hershel Schachter Davening on Airplanes

Several times a year I visit Eretz Yisroel. When I take a night flight I notice that many men sleep for five to six hours, and then recite Shema and daven Shacharis after waking up, as if they were at a seven o'clock minyan back in the United States. However, because the airplane is flying from West to East and traversing several time zones, the zman Krias Shema keeps getting earlier and earlier, following the zman Krias Shema on the ground over which the airplanes is flying^[1]. Often, by the time many of the passengers wake up and get ready to start shacharis, the zman on the ground below is already after chatzos and well into the zman of mincha.

Another common mistake people make is regarding davening with a minyan. The Talmud emphasizes the importance of tefillah btzibur; and one who davens with a minyan stands a much better chance of having his prayers answered than one who lacks a minyan. However, it is highly improper for the chazzan of a minyan on an airplane to shout at the top of his lungs to enable the other mispalelim to hear him over the airplane noise, and thereby wake up all the passengers around him. It is true that there is a halachic principle of kofin al hamitzvos, i.e. that beis din has an obligation to force people to observe the mitzvos even when they're not interested in doing so, but this only applies when pressuring an individual will result in his becoming observant. However, when Orthodox Jews disturb non-observant Jewish passengers with their davening, the non-observant passengers will remain non-observant and now just have another point about which to be upset with the Orthodox. The practice of the Orthodox passengers under such circumstances appears simply as an act of harassment. Rather than having accomplished the hidur mitzvah of davening tefillah btzibur, they have violated lifnei iver by causing the non-observant passengers to become more antagonistic towards shemiras hamitzvos. The shouting tone of voice employed by the shaliach tzibbur to overcome the noise on the airplane clearly does not constitute a kavod hatefillah.

The halacha states that when traveling, if it is too difficult to stand for shemoneh esrei even the "amidah" may be recited while seated. On a short flight of an hour and a half to Canada, it is more correct to daven the entire tefillah while still buckled in, in a sitting position. On the long flight to Eretz Yisroel it is healthier not to sit the entire time; walking about somewhat helps the blood circulation in one's legs. As such, there is nothing wrong with standing for shemoneh esrei, provided that there's no turbulence at that time. However, it is still not proper to gather a minyan together near the washrooms, disturbing all the other passengers and the stewardesses. As much as various Torah giants of our generation have expressed their opposition to such minyanim on airplanes^[2], their message has not yet been accepted. We wish everyone a chag kasher v'sameach, and all those traveling to Eretz Yisroel should have a safe trip, but keep in mind – these minyanim are shelo b'ratzon chachamim!

[1] Editor's note: Chaitables.com calculates the zeman tefillah for your flight given your departure and arrival locations and times

[2] See She'eiris Yosef vol. 7, siman 3, by Rav Shlomo Wahrhttp://torahweb.org/thisWeek.htmlman, where he quotes Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (Halichos Shlomo, page 75), Rav Moshe Feinstein (Igros Moshe Orach Chaim vol. 4 siman 20), Rav Ovadia Yosef, and Rav Shmuel Vosner regarding the issue of how to daven on an airplane

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The Mitzvah of Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim

Rabbi Yonason Sacks

Rosh Yeshiva, RIETS

Recounting the Story of the Exodus The mitzvah of “sippur yetziyas Mitzrayim” – recounting the story of the Exodus – constitutes the cornerstone of the Seder experience. In characterizing this mitzvah, the Rambam emphasizes: It is a positive mitzvah from the Torah to tell of the miracles and wonders which our ancestors experienced in Egypt on the night of the 15th of Nissan. Rambam Hilchos Chametz U’Matzah 7:1

At first glance, the mitzvah of “sippur yetziyas Mitzrayim” of Seder night appears quite similar, if not identical, to the daily mitzvah of “zechiras yetziyas Mitzrayim” – remembering the Exodus. Given the apparent similarity, the Rishonim and Achronim attempt to identify the exact differences between these two mitzvos.

Perhaps the most basic difference between the two mitzvos emerges from the opinions of the Ohr Sameach and the Ra’ah. Noting the Rambam’s omission of the mitzvah of zechiras yetziyas Mitzrayim from the Sefer HaMitzvos, the Ohr Sameach (beginning of Hil. Kriyas Shema) suggests that the Rambam maintains that there is no Biblical obligation to remember the Exodus on a daily basis. Rather, the mitzvah of zechiras yetziyas Mitzrayim is purely a rabbinic imperative. The Ra’ah (Berachos 13b s.v. “Amar”) expresses a somewhat similar view, maintaining that although remembering the Exodus during the daytime is Biblical, the zechira of the nighttime is rabbinic. (See also Pri Chadash O.C. 58:1) According to both views, the difference between zechiras and sippur yetziyas Mitzrayim becomes quite apparent: the nightly zechiras yetziyas Mitzrayim is merely a rabbinic obligation, while sippur yetziyas Mitzrayim of the Seder night bears the stringency of a Biblical imperative.

Even if one rejects the opinion of the Ohr Sameach and the Ra’ah, R’ Soloveitchik (Shiurim L’Zecher Abba Mori I:2), quoting his grandfather, R’ Chaim, cited four further distinctions between sippur and zechira. First, zechira applies every night of the year, while sippur applies solely on Seder night. Second, zechira requires a minimal recollection of the Exodus, while sippur demands detailed elaboration of the miracles and wonders which precipitated the Exodus. Third, zechira is a personal mitzvah, obligating an individual to remember the Exodus on his own. Sippur, however, necessitates recital to one’s children and others, in keeping with the possuk “and you shall tell your son on that day” (Shemos 13:8). Fourth, zechiras yetziyas Mitzrayim does not constitute an independent mitzvah, but is rather subsumed under the broader imperative of Kriyas Shema and Kabbalas Ol Malchus Shamayim – “acceptance of the yolk of Heaven.” Sippur, however, is reckoned independently among the canonical six hundred thirteen mitzvos. R’ Soloveitchik himself added a fifth distinction: while zechira requires recollection of the events of the Exodus, sippur demands praise and thanksgiving to HaKadosh Baruch Hu for effecting the Exodus.

Thus, despite the apparent similarities, significant differences distinguish zechiras yetziyas

Mitzrayim and sippur yetziyas Mitzrayim. Sippur and the Other Mitzvos of the Night The Mishnah in Arvei Pesachim quotes the well-known adage of Rabban Gamliel: “Anyone who does not recite the following three things has not fulfilled his obligation: Pesach, Matzah, and Maror.” Mishna Pesachim 116a

While Rabban Gamliel is explicit that fulfillment of one’s “obligation” hinges upon this recitation, what remains unclear is precisely which obligation Rabban Gamliel refers to. Indeed, one could envision two different possibilities. Perhaps, Rabban Gamliel is teaching that the fulfillment of the individual mitzvos of Korban Pesach, matzah, and maror depends upon concomitant recitation of “Pesach,” “Matzah,” and “Maror.” Alternatively, however, perhaps Rabban Gamliel is teaching that fulfillment of the more general mitzvah of sippur yetziyas Mitzrayim depends upon mentioning these specific details.

The interpretation of this Mishnah is subject to considerable debate amongst the Rishonim. Tosafos (ibid., as explained by Aruch L’Ner Sukkah 28a s.v. “Lo”), the Ramban (Milchamos Berachos 2b in Rif), and the Rashbam (Hagaddah HaMeyuchas L’Rashbam L’Hagaddah Shel

Pesach) all strongly imply that Rabban Gamliel refers to the fulfillment of the mitzvos of Korban Pesach, matzah, and maror. The Ra’avan, Kiryas Sefer (Hil. Chametz U’Matza 7:1), and Aruch L’Ner (ibid.), however, maintain that Rabban Gamliel refers to the mitzvah of sippur yetziyas Mitzrayim. In quoting the halacha of Rabban Gamliel in the context of his discussion of sippur yetziyas Mitzrayim, the Rambam (Hil. Chametz U’Matza 7:1-5) also implies this understanding of Rabban Gamliel’s statement.

The understanding of the Ra’avan, Kiryas Sefer, and Aruch L’Ner - that sippur yetziyas Mitzrayim depends upon mentioning Pesach, Matzah, and Maror - suggests a close relationship between Sippur Yetziyas Mitzrayim and the other mitzvos of the night. The Kehillos Yaakov (10:55) derives further support for this relationship from the Gemara in Maseches Pesachim (116b). The Gemarah questions how Rav Yosef and Rav Sheishes, who were both blind, could recite the Haggadah on behalf of their respective Seders, in light of Rav Acha bar Yaakov’s ruling that a blind person is exempt from reciting the Haggadah. Since an individual who is exempt from a mitzvah cannot exempt an individual who is obligated, Rav Yosef and Rav Sheishes should have been ineligible to exempt the other obligated participants. The Gemara explains their practice by ruling that matzah in the post-Mikdash era is only a rabbinic requirement. Because everyone’s obligation – even those who are not blind – is only rabbinic, Rav Yosef and Rav Sheishes could exempt their respective parties. The Kehillos Yaakov notes that the Gemara’s response is puzzling. If the inquiry of the Gemara pertains to the mitzvah of reciting the Haggadah (sippur yetziyas Mitzrayim), why does the Gemara present support for the practices of Rav Yosef and Rav Sheishes from the seemingly unrelated mitzvah of matzah? Apparently, the Gemara understands the mitzvah of matzah to be in fact closely linked to the mitzvah of sippur yetziyas Mitzrayim. Hence, if the mitzvah of matzah does not apply Mid’oraisa nowadays, one must by extension assume that the mitzvah of sippur yetziyas Mitzrayim is equally inapplicable Mid’oraisa.

The Teshuvos Chessed L’Avraham (Tinyana, O.C. 54) goes even further in describing the relationship between sippur yetziyas Mitzrayim and the other mitzvos of Seder night, arguing that one who lacks matzah and maror cannot fulfill the mitzvah of sippur yetziyas Mitzrayim. He explains that this critical relationship accounts for the absence of a beracha on sippur yetziyas Mitzrayim. In order to warrant a beracha, a mitzvah must exist independently. A mitzvah which is dependent upon another mitzvah, however, does not warrant a beracha. For example, although the Ramban (Sefer Hamitzvos, Shores 12) counts the designation of terumah and the giving of terumah to a Kohen as two separate mitzvos, one does not recite a beracha upon giving terumah to a Kohen, because this mitzvah depends upon a prior designation of terumah. Similarly, because sippur yetziyas Mitzrayim depends upon the mitzvos of matzah and maror, one does not recite an individual beracha for sippur.

The Chessed L’Avraham suggests that this idea also underlies the Terumas HaDeshen’s opinion (125) that a minor who elects to participate in sippur yetziyas Mitzrayim on the Seder night should also refrain from eating matzah on erev Pesach. By doing so, the minor will retain an appetite to be able to fulfill the mitzvah of matzah on the Seder night. Apparently, the Terumas HaDeshen assumes that sippur yetziyas Mitzrayim, even if performed in a rabbinic fashion by a minor, should always be accompanied by the mitzvos of matzah and maror.

R’ Ovadya Yosef (Chazon Ovadya I 23) disagrees with the Chessed L’Avraham, maintaining that one can certainly fulfill sippur yetziyas Mitzrayim in the absence of matzah and maror. Citing the Pri Megadim and the Oneg Yom Tov, R’ Ovadya Yosef argues that sippur yetziyas Mitzrayim exists as an independent mitzvah, entirely distinct from the mitzvos of matzah and maror. Hence, failure to consume matzah and maror in no way invalidates one’s fulfillment of sippur. R’ Soloveitchik suggested a further connection between Sippur Yetziyas Mitzrayim and

other mitzvos of the night. The Mishnah (Pesachim 119b) teaches that one may not eat after consuming the afikoman. In this context, the Rishonim debate the reason for the institution of the afikoman. The Rashbam (ibid., s.v. "Ain") maintains that consumption of the afikoman fulfills the primary obligation of achilas matzah for the Seder. The matzah eaten earlier in the Seder (during Motzi Matzah) serves a more technical purpose, inaugurating the seudas Yom Tov.

The Rosh (Pesachim 10:34), however, disagrees, maintaining that the mitzvah of matzah is fulfilled during Motzi Matzah. The afikoman merely serves as a commemoration of the Korban Pesach eaten in the times of the Beis Hamikdash at the end of the Seder. While the Rashbam and the Rosh state their views explicitly, the Rambam's understanding of afikoman is not entirely clear. On the one hand, the Rambam rules (Hil. Chametz U'Matzah 6:1) that a person fulfills his matzah obligation upon consuming a single k'zayis of matzah. This ruling implies that the initial consumption of matzah after Maggid fulfills the mitzvah. On the other hand, in explaining the prohibition of eating after the afikoman, the Rambam writes (Hil. Chametz U'Matzah 8:9) that this prohibition serves "so that one will conclude the meal with the taste of Pesach or (in post-Mikdash times) matzah in his mouth, ? since their consumption is the mitzvah." In referring to the matzah of afikoman as "the mitzvah," the Rambam seems to suggest that it is the afikoman which fulfills the primary mitzvah of matzah. R' Soloveitchik suggested that the Rambam's understanding may be rooted in the relationship between sippur yetziyas Mitzrayim and the other mitzvos of the Seder night. Although the mitzvah of matzah itself is fulfilled with the initial consumption of matzah after Maggid, the mitzvah of sippur yetziyas Mitzrayim throughout the Seder requires the continued presence of matzah and maror in front of the individual. The Rambam maintains that when a person retains the lingering taste of matzah in his mouth for the conclusion of the Seder, Halacha considers the situation as if matzah is literally present before the person. This halachic simulation enables an individual to continue to fulfill the mitzvah of sippur yetziyas Mitzrayim through the conclusion of the Seder. R' Soloveitchik's explanation may also shed light upon the opinion of the Ba'al HaMaor. The Ba'al HaMaor (Pesachim 26b in Rif) maintains that the prohibition of eating after the afikoman exists only while a person is involved in fulfilling the mitzvah of sippur yetziyas Mitzrayim. Once the Seder concludes, however, a person may resume eating and drinking. Based on R' Soloveitchik's explanation, one could explain that the role of the prohibition is to facilitate the lingering "taste of matzah in his mouth" in order to enable continued fulfillment of sippur yetziyas Mitzrayim. Once the Seder has concluded, he no longer performs the mitzvah of sippur, and thus the taste of matzah is no longer necessary.

In a very different context, the Ramban also underscores the intrinsic relationship between sippur yetziyas Mitzrayim and the other mitzvos of the night. In his additions to the Sefer Hamitzvos (positive mitzvah 15), the Ramban objects to the Rambam's conspicuous omission of Birchos HaTorah – the blessings recited upon Torah study – from the Sefer Hamitzvos. If Birchos HaTorah are a Mitzvah D'oraisa, reasons the Ramban, why does the Rambam fail to count them? In light of this omission, the Sha'agas Aryeh (24) suggests that the Rambam believes that Birchos HaTorah are required only Mid'rabbanan. The Kiryas Sefer (Hil. Tefillah 12), however, argues that the Rambam does maintain that Birchos HaTorah are Mid'oraisa, but refrained from counting them independently because they are included as a part of the broader mitzvah of Talmud Torah itself. In challenging the Ramban, the Ramban raises the Kiryas Sefer's possibility, but immediately rejects it, noting that the Rambam always counts mitzvos d'oraisa independently, even if they are merely components of a broader mitzvah. After all, reasons the Ramban, if the Rambam counts Mikra Bikurim (the passage recited upon bringing the first fruits) independently from the mitzvah of Bikurim, and sippur yetziyas Mitzrayim independently from the mitzvah of Korban Pesach, he should certainly count Birchos HaTorah independently from Talmud Torah.

Because the Rambam does not list Birchos HaTorah independently, he must understand them to be Mid'rabbanan.

The Ramban's almost parenthetical analogy, comparing the relationship between Birchos HaTorah and Talmud Torah to the relationship between Sippur Yetziyas Mitzrayim and Korban Pesach, is quite revealing. Just as Birchos HaTorah are conceptually linked to the mitzvah of Talmud Torah, so too sippur yetziyas Mitzrayim is fundamentally connected to the mitzvah of Korban Pesach. In this context, it is also worth noting that the Ramban's analogy between Birchos HaTorah and Sippur Yetziyas Mitzrayim fits consistently with his general understanding of Birchos HaTorah as a birkas hoda'ah – a beracha of thanksgiving towards HaKadosh Baruch Hu. Because of their encomiastic nature, Birchos HaTorah resemble sippur yetziyas Mitzrayim. If Birchos HaTorah were not a birkas hoda'ah, however, the analogy to Sippur Yetziyas Mitzrayim would be less clear.

As a final note, the Rosh (Teshuvos HaRosh 24:2) also appears to view the mitzvah of sippur yetziyas Mitzrayim as being fundamentally linked to the other mitzvos of the Seder. The Rosh explains that no beracha is recited upon sippur yetziyas Mitzrayim because the other mitzvos of the night unequivocally proclaim our mindset to engage in the mitzvah of recounting the Exodus. Because we are eating matzah and maror, no declaration of intent (in the form of a beracha) is necessary for the sippur itself, as these practices provide context and meaning for the sippur. In essence, the Matzah itself functions as a "quasi-birkas hamitzvah" for sippur yetziyas Mitzrayim, calling attention to the greatness of the miracles and the obligation to remember in much the same way of a typical birkas hamitzvah.

What emerges from all of these Rishonim is that the mitzvah of sippur is intrinsically connected, on both a practical and conceptual level, to the other mitzvos of the night. This connection thus represents another major difference between zechiras yetziyas Mitzrayim of the entire year and sippur yetziyas Mitzrayim of the Seder night.

The Scope of Sippur Yetziyas Mitzrayim The Rishonim debate the minimal recitation necessary to fulfill one's obligation of sippur yetziyas Mitzrayim. The Avudraham (cited by Rabbeinu Yerucham, Nesiv Chamishi:4) explains that no beracha is recited on the recital of the Hagaddah because the mitzvah of sippur yetziyas Mitzrayim has already been fulfilled by mentioning the three words "zecher l' yetziyas Mitzrayim" in Kiddush. The Avudraham's reasoning presupposes that sippur yetziyas Mitzrayim can be fulfilled through a minimalistic recognition of the Exodus. The Pri Megadim (Pesicha L'Hilchos Kriyas Shema) concurs, explaining that Chazal instituted the Hagaddah at a later point in history, but the basic D'oraisa chiyuv merely requires a nominal mentioning of the Exodus on the Seder night. The Nesivos HaMishpat (Haggadah Shel Pesach Ma'aseh Nisim) disagrees, maintaining that the Torah obligation of sippur yetziyas Mitzrayim requires an elevated retelling of everything which transpired from beginning to end. The Nesivos draws a parallel to Purim, which is only a rabbinic mitzvah, yet requires the recitation of the entire Megillah in order to fulfill one's obligation. If reading the Megillah requires completeness and thoroughness, then the Mitzvah of sippur yetziyas Mitzrayim should certainly warrant a comprehensive and complete recital. Moreover, adds the Nesivos, grammatically, the phraseology "v'higadeta" denotes an extended recounting, not a mere mentioning. R' Chaim Soloveitchik (cited above) also agrees with the Nesivos, proposing that the mitzvah of sippur demands detailed descriptions of the miracles and wonders which HaKadosh Baruch Hu performed on our behalf.

Articulating Sippur Yetziyas Mitzrayim The Rosh (Teshuvos HaRosh 24:2) writes that the need for "Hagaddah" – "retelling" – in the context of sippur yetziyas Mitzrayim is not to be taken literally. Even if one merely contemplates yetziyas Mitzrayim, the obligation is fulfilled. The Sefer HaChinuch 21, however, disagrees, maintaining that actual articulation is necessary in order to fulfill the mitzvah. Even a person dining alone must speak the Hagaddah to himself, "for his speech will arouse his heart." The Pri Megadim (M'Z 474:1) suggests that this debate may depend on the

dispute Amoraim (Berachos 20b) regarding whether or not hirhur, thought, is tantamount to dibur, speech: The Rosh maintains that thought is tantamount to speech, and one may therefore merely contemplate the Hagaddah. The Chinuch argues that thought is not equated with speech, and actual pronunciation of the terms is thus essential.

The Pri Megadim adds that if thought is tantamount to speech, one can account for the absence of a beracha on the mitzvah of sippur, as Chazal never instituted a beracha for a mitzvah which can be fulfilled through mere thought. R' Shlomo Kluger (Hashmatos to Shu"t Haalef Lecha Shlomo O.C. 40) rejects the Pri Megadim's analysis, maintaining that sippur absolutely requires speech, according to both opinions in the Gemarah in Berachos. R' Kluger explains that the dispute in Berachos pertains only to mitzvos which the Torah specifically demands dibur. Sippur, however, is different. As opposed to dibur, speech, the Torah stipulates "Hagaddah," which denotes "communication," an interaction between two individuals. Based on the Torah's diction, R' Shlomo Kluger infers that both opinions in the Gemarah in Berachos would maintain that one cannot fulfill sippur yetziyas Mitzrayim unless it is recited in a manner that could possibly be heard by others.

In light of R' Kluger's interpretation, a further distinction emerges between the mitzvah of sippur and zechiras yetziyas Mitzrayim. Although R' Kluger argues that sippur demands speech, perhaps he would admit that zechira can be fulfilled through mere mental contemplation. The Shaagas Aryeh (13), however, rejects this distinction, arguing that even zechiras yetziyas Mitzrayim requires verbal articulation. Citing the requirement to verbally articulate zechiras Amalek as a model, the Shaagas Aryeh derives that any zechira requires verbal declaration.

Even if one accepts the Shaagas Aryeh's view that both sippur and zechiras yetziyas Mitzrayim require speech, one can still distinguish between the two. R' Yehudah rules in Maseches Berachos (15a) that although one must ideally recite the Shema in an audible tone, if one articulated the words inaudibly, one fulfills the obligation post-facto. The Rashba (ibid. s.v. "Amar Rav Yosef") implies that this rule is Mid'oraisha. Based on this Gemarah, R' Asher Weiss (Hagaddah Shel Pesach Minchas Asher 4) suggests that although one fulfills the requirement of zechiras yetziyas Mitzrayim even if it was recited in an inaudible tone, perhaps the higher standard of "Hagaddah" necessary for sippur yetziyas Mitzrayim would necessitate recitation in an audible tone.

http://www.ou.org/shabbat_shalom/article/the_four_sons_revisiting_a_familiar_passover_narrative/ March 24, 2010

The Four Sons: Revisiting a Familiar Passover Narrative By Rabbi Eliyahu Safran

The stage is set – the table is bedecked in fine linen; the chairs, with soft pillows. The props are in place – the Seder plate, Elijah's cup, the matzot. The players are in their places, reclining with their scripts, their haggadot, at hand. The lights (candles) go up. There is a hush as the youngest enters the room and gazes upon the scene before him. "How different is this night from all others!"

Different indeed.

And no accident that the youngest child is called upon to utter the enthralling words that have enlivened the Seder ritual for hundreds upon hundreds of years. The central commandment of our Passover Seder obligation is to tell and to teach. On that day, you shall tell your son what the Lord, your God, did for you in bringing you out of Egypt...

Among many other things, our ancient rabbis were brilliant educators. God had commanded that we teach our children. The question then became, How best to teach? How best to fulfill this commandment?

To engage and to reward. And to keep the focus on the student – the child. For Pesach is a holiday of children. It is right that it is so. Our Egyptian servitude and suffering was made more painful for its cruelty to our children.

"And he said, When you deliver the Hebrew women look at the birthstool; if it is a boy, kill him!" With these words, Pharaoh sought to cut off our future by denying us a generation of children. He demanded that, "...every son that is born... be cast into the river..."

Why did the Pharaoh cause such suffering against the Jewish people? For no other reason than we multiplied. We became numerous. We gave birth to children, in accordance with God's command to "be fruitful and multiply." However, Pharaoh felt threatened by our numbers. "The children of Israel proliferated, swarmed, multiplied, and grew more and more." How great was Pharaoh's hatred of the Jews and our children? How threatened did he feel? So much so that the Midrash teaches us that when the Israelites fell short in fulfilling the prescribed quota of mortar and bricks, the children were used in their stead to fill in the foundation of the store cities built in their servitude! Another Midrash describes Pharaoh bathing in the blood of young children.

When redemption was finally at hand, children were once again at the forefront of this historical and religious drama. When Moses first confronted Pharaoh with the request to be free to go into the desert to worship, he proclaimed, "We will go with our young and with our old, with our sons and with our daughters." In making this proclamation, he was giving voice to the ultimate purpose of our redemption, found in the central command of Pesach, "You will tell your son on that day, saying: It is because of this the Lord did for me when I came out of Egypt..." Judaism is a faith rooted in the past but which is always forward looking. Tradition loses meaning unless it is passed forward to the next generation. We do not look for individual redemption as much as communal salvation. For that to happen, our children must thrive. They must go forward but with a solid foundation in the godly lessons of our history. The Exodus from Egypt is rife with the significant role our children played in its historical narrative.

God has commanded the teaching the story of our redemption to our children. Our rabbis have fashioned a ritual that is engaging and educational – fulfilling God's command. So it is not surprising that a lesson about learning – the necessary compliment of teaching – is dramatized in the story of the Four Sons. Not surprising, but troubling and ironic that as we finally find our places around the Seder table we find ourselves face to face with the perplexing realization that keneged arba'ah banim dibrah Torah, that the "words of the Torah are in opposition to the four sons!"

What is this? No sooner have we entered into the drama of the retelling of the lessons of the Exodus narrative than we find ourselves in conflict and discord between the Torah and each of the four sons – the wise, the wicked, the simple and the one too young to even know how to ask. How do we make sense of a holiday and ritual devoted to children that also seems to push away those very same children? Is there real discord between the Torah and each of the four sons? Or these "conflicts", upon deeper reflection, also point us in the direction of greater understanding? Might they not represent some deep and fundamental dynamic that exists in the generations of Jewish people themselves? Perhaps these conflicts represent perspectives and approaches to Judaism, each, while falling short of full adherence to genuine and pure Torah commitment, mirroring a chasm that grows in successive generations that our teaching is supposed to bridge.

Picture first then the father. He is from the "old world." He carries no title, no label. He personifies the saying, What you see is what you get. He does not engage in schtick. He represents no polemic. He is not a politician or manipulator. He claims no ideological purity or philosophical bent. He is, simply, a good and pious man – a man devoted to avodat Hashem, yirat shamayim. This man sires a son, a chacham. A wise son. Such a blessing! To have given birth to a wise son. The son observes the commandments. But more than that, he is an intellectual. Emunah, faith, is not sufficient for such a mind as his. He is a mindful "wrestler" with Torah. As Ben Bag Bag exhorts, he turns Torah over and over again, seeking out all its lessons. He

examines the mitzvot determinedly, breaking them down into ever more exacting divisions – edot, chukim and mishpatim. He is, without question, a believer. However, belief is not enough for him. He is not fulfilled until he understands and digests the material and lessons at his own intellectual level. “What is the meaning which our God has commanded you?” Even if the intensity and method of his inquiry is necessarily tainted – who can truly intellectually grasp these things that he seeks to understand? – we remain aware of the chacham’s overall positive traits and go on to teach him all of Torah, from the very beginning up to and including the very last law of Pesach, the afikoman. Moreover, we are assured that as long as the taste of matzah and flavor of Jewish observance and commitment remains with him, the chacham will continue his search for ever deeper meaning. The chacham remains devoted to his personal religious growth. But he sets different goals and expectations for his own son, the next generation. He views the classical yeshiva education of the ‘90s as too rigid and lacking in intellectual rigor. His intellectual mind has taken in the world and its rewards as well as the teaching of Torah. He wants “more” for his own son than was available to him. He advises his son to seek a profession. “There is a bright future in computers,” he notes. He urges his son to look to the Ivy League schools, where worldly success is handed to the graduates along with their diplomas. His son does as his father teaches. But then... he returns home at Spring break and the family Seder to arrogantly and cynically challenge his father. “What is the meaning of this service to you?!” He has allowed the world to give him voice. He is rasha, wicked, for he no longer places himself as a recipient of Jewish tradition. In effect, he has accomplished the task that Pharaoh set up to accomplish all those generations before. The simple son, the tam, grows up in the alienated, confusing, indifferent and “proudly” secularized Jewish home of his rasha father. “Do we have to?” he asks when the family prepares to go to the family Passover dinner. He fumbles and stumbles through the parts assigned to him. Have they not taught him these things in the afternoon synagogue school that he attends only sporadically? his kindly grandfather wonders with concern. The child’s sentimental memories of a caring and giving zeide are not enough to motivate him. What chance can mere sentiment have against the rapid, immoral and unethical place where he lives now? Rather than motivation to return, the tam struggles with these emotions and calls them “guilt” and guilt, he knows because the daytime talk show hosts say so, is a useless and nonproductive emotion. The tam’s son then, finds himself so far removed from the faith and tradition that animated his father’s zeide that he doesn’t even recognize things Jewish, leaving him unable to even formulate an intelligent question. There is not, truth be told, no reason to ask. His great-grandfather is long gone, and his grandfather and father show no interest in passing along an archaic and foolish tradition. “When do we eat?” he asks, trying to circumvent the tedious hagaddah. He cannot be bothered returning to the Seder table after the shulchan orech. There are television shows to watch, and computer games to play. Indeed he is just as likely to show up to a Jewish spring party and burst out with “Happy Birthday” upon seeing the lit candles as to ask the Four Questions, as the Riskin Haggadah, instructs at the bottom of page 61. What are we to do? Build a fence between those who love and fear Torah and the generations of the wicked, the simple and the one too ignorant to even ask? Is that what God would have us do? God’s command is clear. It is not to “Tell your son if he is interested in hearing...” There is no qualification. The children must be told and taught. The gap must be narrowed. Fences must be brought down and bridges erected. Communication must be established and effectively maintained.

I do not minimize the task. However, as Rabbi Tarfon suggests, we are not obligated to complete the task, but we are not free to desist from it either. As daunting as the task is, the gap must be narrowed. Fully a quarter of the sons are r’shaim. So many of the sons are wicked that it is only the r’shaim that the Torah speaks of in the plural! “Then, when your children say to you, what does this service mean to you?” There are so few chachamim. In the United States, there are only 150,000+ students attending Jewish day schools, and many less continue to study in intensive High Schools of Torah. Rabbi Yechezkel Mickelson once asked, at least partially in jest, “Why doesn’t the Torah recommend the same solution and approach of hakeh et sheenav, blunting the teeth of the rasha, as does the Hagaddah?” He answered that, while the Ba’al Hagaddah speaks only of one rasha who could be successfully countered, the Torah speaks of many r’shaim. To fight such a multitude is dangerous and could likely result in harm to the Jewish people. So we are left with our “four sons” and the need to bridge the generations from father to son to son to son to communicate the miracle of our emancipation. Our first task is to bless and extol God for being the Makom, for residing with us in the place of our misery and effecting a miraculous redemption. We then continue in our praise, “Blessed is He who gave the Torah to His people Israel, blessed is He.” God is not only He Who redeemed us from our misery in Egypt but He also gave us, each and every one of us, on that glorious day at Sinai, the all-encompassing code of life we call Torah. All of the sons – wise, wicked, simple and the one too ignorant to know what to ask – regardless of background or temperament stood at Sinai as well. They too are encompassed in the laudatory words introduced by the Ba’al Haggadah to teach the immortal lessons of redemption, “Blessed is God, who gave the Torah to His people Israel. Blessed is He.” It is the wisdom of Torah to speak of four children; one who is wise and one who is wicked; one who is simple and one who does not even know how to ask a question. In order to tell, to teach, effectively it is always necessary to speak to where the student is. This is particularly difficult when we are searching for a starting point to effectively communicate Torah values and ideals to the uninitiated, cynical, simple, negative youngster, and yes, some-times even to the super-intellectual student who believes he “knows it all.” After all, it is all fine and good to include these four children in a single idealistic and laudatory introduction, but quite another to initiate and then engage in a meaningful dialogue with them. It is fine and good for the Rambam to instruct that each son be taught according to his own understanding and abilities. But where to start? How do we motivate the teacher or parent to even want to engage the child who is simple or negative? How to overcome our reluctance to try and speak with the wicked, or suffer the haughtiness of the intellectual? Each of these four must, by definition, ask very different questions and each response must be tailored to the question; each response taking into account the difference in attitude, knowledge and experience of the questioner. Perhaps it will help to recall that we are taught there were a total of four zechuyot, four merits, which together added up to the Israelites’ ultimate redemption and exodus from Egypt. First, there was zechut Avot, the merit of the Fathers. “The God of your fathers appeared to me” followed by the covenant established with the Fathers – “and God recalled His covenant”. There was the zechut of kabbalat haTorah, the merit of the giving of the Torah. Finally, they merited redemption on account of the Paschal sacrifice and circumcision, which they observed, “and I shall see the blood and pass over their houses.” The truth is, each of the four sons arrives at our Seder table with his own zechut, his own merit. The commandment to “Tell your son...” There is no qualification for “difficult” sons, or “unwilling” sons. The command is to tell and to teach. Implicit in the commandment is that no Jew is ever closed

out of the course of Jewish education; each and every Jew has an inherent right to be taught. Each son arrives with a true claim and right to his share of Sinai. The simple son by virtue of his having been equally present and part of kabbalat haTorah while the one who knows not even how to ask by virtue of his zechut Avot. He may not know how to ask but his father and his father's fathers undoubtedly did.

It is true that the wicked son has strayed but his claim to the covenant established by God with his fathers is undeniable. Certainly, the wise son calls on all four merits.

The challenge of Sipur Yetziat Mitzrayim is not simply finding a way to teach individual children based on differences in their ages, attitudes, experiences, knowledge and disposition. It is to find in the Maggid experience the voice of sensitive, discerning, and trained educators. Which is to say, to find the good parent within. Finding that good parent, that good father, enables one to seek and find each child's merit, to establish rapport and dialogue with every type of student.

The Maggid must rely on creativity of heart as much as – or more than – creativity of the mind; commitment, not only skill, love, not merely technique. Any man can tell. Only a discerning, caring, sensitive and giving person can teach.

The commandment expects the first to accomplish the second.

In coming to terms with the dual nature of the command, we consider a well-known question raised in the Haggadah regarding the four sons. As we know, each of the four sons poses the question which defines his nature. However, we find that only three answers are offered – the wicked son and the one who knows not how to ask are given the same answer!

The late Rabbi Yitzchak Hutner explains that there are two basic methods through which the mitzvah of Sipur Yetziat Mitzrayim, of telling of the miracle of our exodus from Egypt, may be accomplished. The first is simply through Haggadah – telling, relating and sharing the story of Egypt. The second involves question and answer, a real give and take between the story-teller and the listener. Rav Hutner argues that the two methods are unrelated and are not necessarily dependent on each other. The Haggadah proclaims that “concerning four sons did the Torah speak, a wise one, a wicked one, a simple one, and one who is unable to ask.” It does not suggest that there is only one method through which to communicate and share the necessary information and knowledge to all four sons.

For the wise and simple sons, parents and teachers have an opportunity not merely to be maggid, to tell and directly share information and knowledge, but also to provoke and respond to their personal inquiries and curiosities. To the wicked and the one unable to ask, we simply tell it as it is, without anticipation of follow-up questions and reactions. In other words, Rabbi Hutner suggesting, there are many ways to share and teach ideas, ideals and concepts. The task of the maggid in fulfilling the commandment is to discover the appropriate method for each student. Each Jew then has a right to learn. For each and every one there is an approach through which to be taught – if only we find the compassion and wisdom to discover the individual merit.

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The Recitation of Hallel in Synagogue on the First Night of Pesach

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highlights this diversity is the minhag to recite Hallel in the synagogue on the first night of Pesach. For hundreds of years, there have been synagogues that recite Hallel and synagogues that don't. In this article, we will discuss the various reasons for this minhag, the practical differences between these reasons and what one should do if one's personal custom is different than the custom of the synagogue.

The Reasons for the Minhag By way of introduction, there is an obligation to recite Hallel at the Seder. This Hallel is different in many ways from the Hallel that is recited in the synagogue on Yom Tov. Most notably, Hallel at the Seder does not require a minyan (ten adult Jewish males); part of the Hallel is recited before the meal and the rest is recited after the meal; and there is no beracha recited prior to Hallel at the Seder.

Rashba (1235-1310) provides a source for reciting Hallel in the synagogue on the first night of Pesach from the Talmud Yerushalmi: If [the beracha] is adjacent to another beracha such as [the berachot of] Keriat Sh'ma and the Amidah, it does not begin with baruch. R. Yirmiyah asked regarding Geulah [the beracha at the conclusion of Maggid]. One can respond based on the statement of R. Yochanan that if one heard [Hallel] in the synagogue, one has fulfilled his obligation.

Talmud Yerushalmi, Berachot 1:5 ??" . :?

There is a rule that if there are two berachot that are recited as part of a series, the second beracha does not open with "baruch." R. Yirmiyah questions this rule from the beracha of "Asher Ge'alanu" which is recited at the Seder at the end of Maggid immediately after the opening of Hallel, yet it opens with "baruch." Shouldn't the beracha recited on Hallel obviate the need to recite "baruch" on the beracha that follows? R. Yochanan responds that if one already recited Hallel in the synagogue, one would not recite a beracha on Hallel at the Seder. Therefore, "Asher Ge'alanu" is not necessarily connected with another beracha and should open with "baruch." Rashba comments:

According to the consensus of the great masters, it seems that this is the explanation of the Talmud Yerushalmi that I mentioned earlier: "One can respond based on the statement of R. Yochanan that if one heard [Hallel] in the synagogue, one has fulfilled his obligation," therefore, the primary institution to read [Hallel] was for the synagogue and not for the house. It is for the reading in the synagogue that they instituted a beracha because it is the primary reading. In the house one does not [recite a beracha]. It must be this way, because it would not make sense that one who hears it in the synagogue fulfills the mitzvah and does not recite a beracha at his table but one who did not hear it in the synagogue would recite Hallel at his table and recite a beracha. People will say [how can it be] that two people are in the same house, one recites Hallel with a beracha and one without?

Chiddushei HaRashba, Berachot 11a ??" ? "? , . ??" .

According to Rashba, the primary recitation of Hallel on the first night of Pesach occurs in the synagogue. For this reason, the beracha is recited in the synagogue and not at the Seder. R. Ya'akov ben Asher (1269-1343) provides a different rationale for the minhag: Regarding the beracha on Hallel, there is a dispute among the rabbis. Ritza would recite two berachot: one before the meal and one after the meal. This was also the practice of Maharam MiRutenberg, Rav Hai, Rav Tzemach and Rav Amram. However, Ritz Gi'at and Avi Ha'Ezri wrote that one should not recite a beracha at all because we split Hallel and recite part of it before the meal and part of it after. Therefore, how can one recite a beracha with an interruption in the middle? This was also the opinion of my father, my master, the Rosh. This is what one should do on every matter that involves doubt regarding its beracha: one should not recite a beracha because berachot do not prevent [fulfillment of a mitzvah]. There are places that recite Hallel in the synagogue publicly in order that they won't have to recite a beracha when reciting Hallel during the Haggadah. This minhag is good and pleasant.

Tur, Orach Chaim no. 473

According to Tur, the recitation of Hallel in the synagogue is a means of avoiding a berachot dilemma. There is a dispute as to whether one should recite a beracha on Hallel at the Seder due to the interruption of the meal. One can avoid the issue by reciting Hallel in the synagogue, where there is no interruption.

R. Menachem Meiri (1249-1306) provides a third explanation for the minhag: This applies to those who have the minhag to recite Hallel in the synagogue before the day starts as a remembrance for the Hallel in the Azarah that they used to recite when they slaughtered the Korban Pesach. Beit HaBechira, Pesachim 117b ?? ? . :

The Mishna, Pesachim 64a, states that Hallel was recited when the Korban Pesach was slaughtered. Meiri suggests that the recitation of Hallel in the synagogue is a remembrance for the Hallel that was recited at the time of slaughtering the Korban Pesach. It should be noted that there are some who have the practice of reciting Hallel if they bake matzah on the afternoon of the 14th. The purpose of this practice is to commemorate the Hallel that was recited when they slaughtered the Korban Pesach. The practice is recorded in R. Alexander Ziskind of Grodno's (d. 1794), Yesod V'Shoreish Ha'Avodah 9:4. R. Yitzchak Safrin, Shulchan HaTahor (in Zer Zahav, ch. 6 at note 23), adds that the minhag in Jerusalem is to recite this Hallel with a beracha. A fourth reason for this minhag is provided by the Vilna Gaon (1720-1797). In his Bei'ur HaGra to Orach Chaim 487:4, the Vilna Gaon suggests that the minhag was instituted to provide those who don't know how to recite Hallel the ability to fulfill the mitzvah.¹ R. Chaim Soloveitchik² provided a fifth reason for reciting Hallel in the synagogue on the first night of Pesach. According to R. Chaim, there are two independent reasons to recite Hallel on the first night of Pesach. The first is a function of the obligation to recite Hallel on Yom Tov. While Hallel on Yom Tov is normally recited during the day, the Gemara, Erchin 10b, derives the obligation from the verse (Yeshaya 30:29) equating Yom Tov to the night of Pesach, implying that there is a special obligation to recite Hallel on the first night of Pesach. The second is a function of the obligation to recite Hallel as part of the Seder. Hallel as a function of Yom Tov can be fulfilled throughout the night. Hallel as a function of the Seder can only be fulfilled at the Seder. Since Hallel as a function of Yom Tov can be fulfilled throughout the night, it is preferable to recite it at the first possible moment. For this reason, it is recited in the synagogue at the conclusion of Ma'ariv.

Practical Differences between the Reasons There are a number of practical differences between the reasons given for the minhag to recite Hallel in the synagogue on the first nights of Pesach. The first difference is in the timeframe of the recitation of Hallel. The Korban Pesach was slaughtered on the 14th of Nissan during the day. The Seder does not begin until nightfall of the 15th. Meiri - following his explanation that the recitation of Hallel serves to commemorate the Hallel that was recited at the slaughter of the Korban Pesach- states that Hallel should be recited before sundown. If one assumes that Hallel in the synagogue relates to the Hallel at the Seder, it is arguable that one should not recite Hallel until the evening. Another factor to consider is the concept of tosefet Yom Tov, which allows one to accept Yom Tov before the actual time. Tosafot, Pesachim 99b, s.v. Ad, note that tosefet Yom Tov does not allow one to perform the mitzvot of the Seder before nightfall. This would include Hallel in the synagogue if one assumes that it relates to the Hallel at the Seder. According to R. Chaim, the Hallel in the synagogue does not relate to the Seder and perhaps tosefet Yom Tov is applicable, allowing one to recite Hallel before nightfall. Second, R. Chaim Y.D. Azulai (1724-1807), Birkei Yosef, Orach Chaim 487:8, writes that if someone whose minhag is to recite Hallel attends a synagogue that does not recite Hallel, he may recite Hallel privately with a beracha after the services. This ruling can assume any of the reasons for the minhag except the reason of the Vilna Gaon. R. Moshe Shternbuch, Moadim U'Zmanim 7:179, notes that according to the Vilna Gaon, the reason for reciting Hallel in the synagogue is to benefit those who are not able to recite Hallel at home and

ostensibly, there is no reason to recite Hallel privately and if one does so, one may not recite a beracha. Third, there are some communities that recite Hallel in the synagogue but do not recite a beracha. [See for example, Minhagei Chatam Sofer note 8 and Dinim V'Hanhagot MiMaran HaChazon Ish, Pesach no. 28.] This practice seems to be a way of fulfilling the minhag while showing deference to the opinions that one should not recite Hallel (which will be discussed in the next section). In reality, this does not fulfill all opinions because according to R. Ya'akov ben Asher, the purpose of the minhag is to provide the ability to recite a beracha. As such, there is no fulfillment of the minhag if one recites Hallel without a beracha.

Why the Minhag is not Universally Accepted As we noted earlier, this minhag is not observed by everyone. On the first night of Pesach, we complete Hallel in the congregation in a pleasant manner and with a beracha at the beginning and end. The same applies on the second night of [those in the Diaspora who observe] the second day of Yom Tov for the Diaspora. Rama: We do not observe any of this because we don't recite Hallel in the synagogue at night at all.

Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 487:4 ? ? ? . : ? . "?:? R. Yosef Karo's Shulch Aruch records Sephardic tradition that one should observe this minhag. Ashkenazic tradition follows the comments of Rama (R. Moshe Iserles 1520-1572) that one should not observe this minhag. ³

There are two basic reasons presented why one should not recite Hallel in the synagogue on the first nights of Pesach. First, R. Naftali Z.Y. Berlin (1816-1893), Meishiv Davar 1:13, writes that the ideal time to fulfill the mitzvah of Hallel is at its proper place in the Seder. If one recites Hallel earlier, one fulfills the mitzvah of Hallel, but not in the ideal form. Once one fulfills the mitzvah, there is no additional fulfillment when one repeats it at the Seder. Therefore, many people refrain from reciting Hallel in the synagogue so as not to fulfill the mitzvah of Hallel in a non-ideal form. R. Yitzchak Z. Soloveitchik (1866-1959, cited in S'deh Avraham, Moadim no. 18) presents a similar objection to the minhag. The Gemara, Pesachim 108b, states that if one drinks all four cups of wine together, he fulfills the aspect of drinking wine, but not the obligation to drink four cups. R. Soloveitchik explains that in order to fulfill the mitzvah of drinking four cups of wine, one must drink each cup after a specific part of the Seder.⁴ The fourth cup of wine must be drunk after Hallel. If one recites Hallel in the synagogue and fulfills his obligation, he cannot fulfill the mitzvah of Hallel again at the Seder and therefore, cannot fulfill the mitzvah of drinking the fourth cup. The Vilna Gaon, op. cit., presents the other reason why this minhag is not universally accepted. He explains that since the reason for reciting Hallel in the synagogue is to provide those who don't know how to recite Hallel the opportunity to recite Hallel, communities whose congregants know how to recite Hallel are not required to recite it in the synagogue. Divergent Practices in the Same Synagogue As we noted earlier, it is common for some congregants in a synagogue to have a minhag that differs from that of the synagogue's minhag. R. Moshe Feinstein (1895-1986), Igrot Moshe, O.C. 2:94, notes that one may not publicly deviate from the synagogue's practice. Therefore, if one is in a synagogue that recites Hallel and his own minhag is to refrain from reciting Hallel, he should recite Hallel with the congregation. In terms of the berachot, R. Feinstein writes that if he can skip the berachot in a manner that won't be noticeable, he should do so, but if not, he may recite the berachot as well. R. Moshe Shternbuch op. cit., questions R. Feinstein's ruling that it is permissible to recite a beracha. It is reported (in Haggadah Shel Pesach MiBeit Levi, Kovetz Hosafot page 65 and MiPninei HaRav page 88) that R. Yitzchak Z. Soloveitchik used to walk out of the synagogue while the congregation recited Hallel. This implies that he rejects R. Feinstein's premise that one must recite Hallel with the congregation, even if that is not one's minhag. ⁵ If one has the minhag to recite Hallel and is in a congregation that omits it, the only option is to recite it privately. According to R. Azulai, one may recite Hallel with a beracha privately. R. Shternbuch, op. cit., concludes that one should not recite a beracha unless he recites Hallel together with the congregation.

Footnotes 1 See also, Bei'ur HaGra to Orach Chaim 671:7, where he implies that the minhag was instituted in order to publicize the miracles of Pesach in a public setting (pirsummei nisa). 2 Quoted in Shiurim LZecher Abba Mari Vol. I (page 3) and in Harerei Kedem Vol. II, no. 101. 3 Some Ashkenazic communities have adopted the practice of reciting Hallel. See, for example, Sefer Eretz Yisrael page 62, Igrot Moshe, O.C. 2:94, citing those who follow the practices of the Vilna Gaon and Teshuvot Maharshag 1:30. 4 See R. Soloveitchik's Chiddushei Maran Riz HaLevi, Hilchot Chametz U'Matzah 7:7, where he develops this idea further. 5 It is possible that R. Soloveitchik did not view reciting Hallel with the congregation as a valid option based on his aforementioned opinion that recitation of Hallel in the synagogue prevents one from fulfilling the mitzvah of drinking four cups of wine.

From: <yeshivauniversity@yeshivauniversitycenterforthejewishfuture.com> Sent: Mon, Mar 22, 2010 11:40 am Subject: Yeshiva University's Pesach To-Go 5770 YESHIVA UNIVERSITY • PESACH TO-GO • NISSAN 5770 Excerpted from The Royal Table: A Passover Haggadah (OU Press, 2010). For more information, please visit www.OUPress.org

Pesah, Matzah, and Maror

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The whole of the Seder shows the development from the impersonal to the personal, from the historical to the biographical, from recounting to reliving. Thus the central portion of the Haggadah explains each of the major symbols: pesah, matzah, maror. Each of these is defined in a manner more historical than personal. Thus, the reason for the Passover sacrifice is: God passed over our ancestor's homes in Egypt. We eat matzah: because the dough of our ancestors did not have time to ferment. And we eat the maror: because the Egyptians embittered the lives of our ancestors in Egypt. All the holiday seems to be a historical recollection. However, immediately thereafter we join the personal to the historical. We declare that we too are participants in the Exodus story. The redemption was not only of our ancestors, but of ourselves as well. Hence, immediately before the Hallel we raise our cups and declare, "Therefore we are obligated to praise and thank Almighty God who performed all these miracles both for our ancestors and for us!" And in anticipation of the great Hallel of this Passover Seder, we shall recite before God a new shirah, a new song. No longer are we historians; now we are participants. We are ourselves involved with the great experience of redemption. May that be our call this Passover, this year, and throughout our lives. May we learn to pierce the harsh facade of impersonality of modern life with the warm rays of a Jewish heart and soul. May we, and all Israel, and indeed all the world, recite before our Father in heaven a new shirah, a new song, singing of the redemption of all men and all mankind: Haleluyah, praise the Lord!

Pesah Maharal notes that the Passover sacrifice could not be offered on the altar with any of its parts missing or burned separately; the entire animal had to be offered as one - hence, the principle of an unfragmented unity. Similarly, the very idea of matzah suggests the same theme. It consists of nothing but flour and water, the simplest and most minimal ingredients for bread, without any additives such as yeast or sourdough. The commandment to eat matzah and to refrain from hametz is thus again suggestive of the unity theme. Finally, we are not permitted to offer up the Passover sacrifice outside of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. Every family had to come to the center of the nation and there, on the Temple Mount, offer the paschal lamb, slaughter it, and eat it. Here the principle of geographical unity is affirmed in the laws of Passover. Hence, from all these laws, we learn to rededicate ourselves to the concept of oneness. But Passover suggests not only the oneness of God but also the oneness of mankind; not only preaching but prophecy; not only doctrine but vision of the future. Hence, we read in the Haftarah of the last day of Passover the immortal words of Isaiah, who speaks of the redemption to come in the end of days when the Messiah will arrive. Isaiah's words are known to all

mankind: "And the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid... and the cow and the bear shall feed together." (Isaiah 11:6-7). In these metaphors does the prophet paint for all the picture of cosmic unity that will prevail when Israel will be redeemed. It is a vision of human oneness, reflecting and proclaiming the oneness of God, which has fascinated civilization for some twenty-five centuries.

Matzah can be described as a dialectic baked into unleavened dough. It oscillates between two opposite poles: It recalls the magnificence of the Exodus when our ancestors were commanded to hurry to leave Egypt, before even allowing the dough to rise, and hence a token of divine redemption. It also is, physically, a sign of poverty. Thus, the Seder begins by holding the matzah aloft and saying, ha lahmah anya, this is the bread of affliction, the pauper's bread that we ate as slaves in Egypt. We declare that now we are slaves, but by next year we hope to be free, thus defining the two poles of the Seder experience: slavery and freedom. Think of the matzah therefore as a kind of mirror held up to us as we gather round the seder table; our very own Royal Table. We acknowledge our humble beginnings as slaves ('avadim hayinu), and as well, our lowly origins as pagans ('ovedei 'avodah zarah hayu avoteinu), and then recount the wonders of God, who then granted us national freedom and spiritual excellence. We eat bitter herbs to recall the bitterness of servitude under the Egyptian taskmasters, but we recite a blessing as we do so, thus overcoming the harshness by elevating it to a blessing, a typical Jewish maneuver. We recount the seder that took place on the eve of the Bar Kokhba rebellion against the Romans — a seder attended by five of the most distinguished scholars in Jewish history — and yet the seder is constructed so as to attract the attention and participation of even very young children. Traditionally we begin the actual meal by eating a hard-boiled egg — the symbol of grief, especially as the first day of Passover falls on the same day of the week as does Tish'ah be-Av, the national day of mourning marking the destruction of the two Temples in Jerusalem. Yet we also drink the four cups of wine, celebrating our joy at our four-fold deliverance by the God of Israel. The festival of Passover is the celebration of our freedom. Passover not only commemorates an act of liberation in the dim past, but also reminds us that the aspiration to and striving for freedom are unending tasks. Freedom is quixotic. One is never sure of it. It is not something which, once achieved, is forever certain, safe, and secure. It requires constant struggle. Judaism no doubt endorses the American Revolutionary slogan, "Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty."

All of Jewish history is, in a manner of speaking, a long record of freedom lost and regained; a drama of galut and ge'ullah (exile and redemption); of herut and 'avdut (freedom and slavery). It is as if Jewish history were really a large Seder table, where sometimes we drink the Four Cups and are heady with freedom — and then bite into the bitter herbs and experience the agony of subjugation; where now we practice hessebah, inclining in a manner of aristocracy (in addition to health reasons as mentioned in the Talmud), and then taste the humiliation of the haroset. And sometimes, perhaps most times, life is more like the matzah — a peculiar and paradoxical blending of both motifs, of freedom (for matzah is the sign of that bread which did not rise because we were in a hurry to leave Egypt and emerge from servitude) and slavery (the "bread of affliction"). Matzah is called "lehem 'oni, the poor man's bread" — a denial of the ability of money or material influence to save us. It is a symbolic refutation of the omnipotence of science and technology by the very fact that matzah must be made from the simplest of substances, flour and water alone, in the most primitive of ways. The matzah is a bread which does not rise, it does not push itself up in boastfulness, and is thus a symbol of humility, a denial of the working of the ego in and of itself. Pleasure too is counted out: by custom we do not salt the matzah that we eat at the Seder as we do with the bread that we eat all year long. And even power is dismissed, symbolized by the fact that the matzah we eat at the Seder, in fulfillment of the special commandment, must be perusah, a broken matzah, a symbol of powerlessness. So the matzah itself is a symbol of iconoclasm or the

breaking of the idols of our times, and thus becomes a most appropriate “food of faith,” as some Kabbalists refer to matzah.

Maror The maror that we eat at the Seder is more than just a vegetable recalling the hard times inflicted upon our remote ancestors in ancient Egypt. It is the very symbol of human anguish through all the ages, and what we do with the maror is an expression of the Jewish philosophy of suffering as it issues out of the historical experience of the Jewish people. Consider how astounding is our attitude towards this piece of food and how it speaks volumes to us. We do not weep when we eat it. We take this maror, this morsel of misery, and we recite a berakhah over it, as if to say, “Thank you, God, for the miserable memory!” We then take this bitter herb and dip it into haroset, the sweet paste of wine and nuts and fruit. Life, we say in effect, is neither all bitter nor all sweet. With rare exceptions, it is bittersweet, and we ought not to bemoan our fate but to bless God for it. Ever since Adam and Eve ate of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, our Kabbalists taught us, good and evil are comingled, and life offers us neither pure, unadulterated goodness nor pure, unredeemable wickedness. The pessimist deplores the bitter and the bad that corrupts the sweet and the good. The optimist is delighted that the sharp edge of bitterness is softened with sweetness, that there is some good everywhere. That is why when the Jew, the eternal optimist, dips his maror into the haroset, he makes a berakhah. That too is why when we celebrate the zeman herutenu, the season of our liberation, we lean and recline as did ancient Roman noblemen while partaking of their banquet. Let others laugh at the comical Jew who tells himself he is a king while he is being tormented. We know it is true. Life is bitter, but we have dipped it into the sweetness of haroset. Hence, as we come to Pesah this year and every year, we relearn our lesson. Many of us enter the holiday burdened with a secret sigh, a heavy heart, a distracted mind, and a soul sorely troubled. Yet, as Jews, we shall look for the sweet, we shall perform the tibal maror beharoset, the dipping of the maror in the haroset, and experience by sheer will the simhat yom tov, the happiness of the holiday. But the message of maror is more than just the awareness of the bittersweet taste of life, more than just the idea that every black cloud has a silver lining. What maror wants to tell us is that misery is not meaningless, that pain is not pointless punishment, that human anguish has larger dimensions, and that the bitter leads to the sweet. In fact, without the foretaste of maror, haroset loses its value. There can be no sweet without bitter, no light without darkness before it, no joy without prior sadness. There can be no wealth without poverty, no faith without doubt, no freedom without slavery, no redemption without exile. A people that dips maror into haroset and makes a berakhah over it is defeated neither by fate nor by foe. A folk that can find the mellow in a morsel of misery can drive away the darkness with its own light, the outer sorrow with the inner joy.

Korech This is the famous “Hillel sandwich.” This version restricts it to matzah and maror. These two foodstuffs are most prominent in the seder, and they symbolize two opposites. Matzah is the symbol of freedom, and maror of pain and exile and suffering. Both together are the essential twin components of zekher le-mikdash ke-Hillel, of our historic Jewish national memory. Such memory oscillates between the two antonyms of freedom and exile. Jewish memory encompasses both of these poles which complement each other. In an entirely different context, the two reappear not in the framework of a joyous banquet, but in the fatal confrontation of Israel with Amalek — the wild, untamed, and murderous tribe, symbol of all that is evil and despicable. And, just as in the tension between matzah and maror there are two elements clashing with each other, so with regard to Amalek: “timheh et zekher ‘Amalek, you shall erase the memory of Amalek,” and “lo tishkah, you shall not forget.” (Deuteronomy 25:19). When we confront naked evil in all its ugliness, the Torah demands of us two different but related reactions: remembering and not forgetting. “Remembering” consists of conjuring up discreet events or attitudes, scenes that punctuate your life at certain set times. “Not forgetting,” is not characterized by specific acts, whether physical or psychological, but by

that which endures through all seasons, insinuates itself into every crevice of your memory and becomes part of your very being. While “remembering” is called into action at certain set times, such as Purim or Ta’anit Esther, and when prodded is proclaimed with gusto, “not-forgetting” becomes an integral part of your psychic and spiritual reality, often residing just below the level of your consciousness, and springing into readiness to protest at the first sign of Amalekite cruelty; and holds for all times and not merely at previously designated occasions. Hence, an interesting relationship: matzah is an episodic event or series of events, as is the commandment “Remember what Amalek did unto you,” while maror is parallel to “you shall not forget” — a constant and uninterrupted awareness of the Amalek-Nazi axis and the consuming bitterness of their victims, and, ultimately, a Holocaust awareness that is not confined to Purim or Yom ha-Sho’ah but is sensitive to the murderous potential of anti-Semitism beyond a certain level of social or political venom.

In this age of polarization it is important to point out the danger of “Too Much of a Good Thing.” What I plead for is that in any moral or ethical problem — and life is full of them at every turn — we consider all values, both during and after the choice between competing values. Any one value, when taken to an extreme, can be corrupted. If we consider all positive values together, even if we must choose one over the other, there is less chance of debasing ourselves, our lives, or society.

We need a dialectic of virtues, a harmonization of competing goods. We need freedom and responsibility; peace and self-defense; love and morality; patience and toughness; discipline and independent thinking. Like Hillel, who would make a sandwich of matzah and the bitter herbs and eat them together, we must manage to combine two different mitzvot, one bland and the other bitter, and not overdo either one at the total expense of the other.

Jewish life today must reveal that idea of balance, of not overdoing things, of a Seder that comes to an end with the afikoman. Religious perfectionism is a good thing. It means insistence upon more Torah, more observance of commandments, more morality. But religious perfectionism overdone can lead to isolationism, the kind that characterizes too much of Orthodoxy today. This is too much of a good thing — and we are warned not to be too much of a tzadik. At the same time, tolerance and understanding and acceptance of those of different opinions are certainly virtuous. Without tolerance, society crumbles. But done to an extreme, these will lead to indifference, to deciding that it makes no difference what you believe, what you practice, what you want to do. This leads to the breakdown of Judaism. Instead, we must have a dialectic of various virtues, an equilibrium between them, not going too far in either direction.

Leaning

We lean on the left side when we drink the four cups and eat the matzah, according to the Talmud, because of a hygienic reason: not to choke on our food. But beyond that, scholars suggest other dimensions. The leaning is a symbol of aristocracy and freedom. But this is puzzling: Why adopt for our Jewish religious purposes a form or posture that was unique to the Romans of two thousand years ago? Why retain this fossilized Roman custom when we have so many beautiful Jewish customs? The answer, I suggest, lies in irony. Why is our seder lacking and incomplete today? Why do we not observe the Passover sacrifice which was the center of our seder in the days of independence? Why are we today in exile? It is because the Romans of two thousand years ago destroyed the Temple. But we shall not allow that destruction to rob us of our authenticity and undo us as a people. And so, today, we practice that very Roman symbol of freedom, the inclining on the left side. We adopt the Roman posture of leisure — and we thereby celebrate zekher le-Mikdash, remembering everything that occurred in the Temple, while they, the Romans who ravaged the Temple, are no longer in existence!

from Rabbi Dovid Gottlieb <yutorah@yutorah.org> reply-to yutorah@yutorah.org
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Pesach: Appreciating Our Blessings Rabbi David Gottlieb

The Daled Kosos, the rabbinic requirement to drink four cups of wine, provide the structure around which the Haggadah is recited. Given the central role it plays at the Seder, it is worth considering the source and rationale for this mitzvah. Many of us are familiar with the opinion of Rashi (Bamidbar 15:41), Bartenura (Pesachim 10:1), and other commentators that the four cups were established to parallel the "Arba Leshonos Shel Ge'ulah," the four terms used in the Torah to describe the redemption. God declares: (1) "ve'hotzeisi eschem mi'tachas sivlos mitzrayim" - I will take you out from the Egyptian oppression; (2) "ve'hitzalti eschem me'avodasam" - I will save you from their servitude; (3) "ve'gealti eschem bizroah netuyah" - I will redeem you with an outstretched arm; and (4) "ve'lakachti eschem li le'am" - I will take you to be My people. (Shemos 6:6-7) Not as well known, however, is the subtle variation of this presentation that is found in the Talmud Yerushalmi (Pesachim, chapt. 10). While the same verses are cited as the source for the obligation, yet in the Yerushalmi they are characterized not as the "Arba Leshonos Shel Ge'ulah," the four terms of redemption, but rather, as "Arba Ge'ulos," the four redemptions. The Torah Temimah (Shemos 6:6 #5) suggests that far from being a minor discrepancy, in fact a deeper distinction lies between these two versions. "Arba Leshonos," four terms of redemption, conveys the idea that these are different ways of describing the same phenomenon. There is one ge'ulah, one salvation, and this one ge'ulah is described in four different ways. But if that's the case, wonders the Torah Temimah, why four different cups if hoda'ah? Talk is cheap! We aren't drinking to celebrate the prediction - or even description - of the redemption; we are celebrating the actual ge'ulah. And in that case there should only be one cup. The implication of the variant text however, the version of "Arba Ge'ulos," is that there are actually four different salvations being celebrated. The Torah Temimah explains that upon further examination there are actually four distinct stages alluded to by these different terms. The first is "ve'hotzeisi," which refers to the fact that Hashem lessened the burden of their work. The Jews were still slaves but it wasn't as hard as it had been previously. As a result there was a need for the second redemption, "ve'hitzalti," when God grants them complete emancipation. They were no longer slaves, but they were still living under an oppressive and tyrannical regime. So Hashem delivers a third salvation, "ve'ga'alti," now the Jewish people are free and can actually leave Egypt. But there is still one thing missing, and that is the final ge'ulah, "ve'lakachti." Now they have not only freedom, but more importantly, a purpose to that freedom; they Hashem's "Chosen People." According to this text, explains the Torah Temimah, there are actually four different ge'ulos, four independent salvations, and, thus, four separate cups. The significance of this insight is of profound importance, not just because it deepens our understanding of Yetzias Mitzrayim, but also because of the lesson it can teach us about many areas of our hectic and often challenging life. Even though the redemption from Egypt was not complete until receiving the Torah at Sinai, we are still appreciative of all of the different "partial salvations" along the way towards that final goal. That's why we drink celebratory cups of wine for all four of the ge'ulos, because by so doing we are declaring, in essence, that there can be redemption even without total redemption. Each one of the four, while incomplete, is still significant and, therefore, still deserving of our appreciation. Similarly, when it comes to our own personal lives, we must be appreciative of what we have been blessed with even when things are not perfect. In all aspects of our lives - be it personal or professional - we can find things which are lacking and which could be improved upon. But the key to life isn't in looking for all of ways that life isn't perfect but by being thankful for all of the ways that life is great. Sure we can and should strive for greater success in all areas of life. But we must be appreciative for the happiness, success, and fulfillment which we already possess. Ve'hotzeisi, Ve'hitzalti, Ve'ga'alti, Ve'lakachti: four different ge'ulos, all of which are worthy of their own cup of blessing. We all have so much to be thankful for. When we look at our own lives we must ask: How many cups of blessing?

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The Fifth Cup Rav Moshe Lichtman

Our Sages teach that the four cups of wine we drink at the Seder correspond to the four "expressions of redemption" found in this week's parashah (see BeReishit Rabbah 88; Yerushalmi, Pesachim 10:1; Rashbam, Pesachim 99b):

Therefore, say to the Children of Israel: "I am the Lord, and I will take you out from under the burdens of Egypt, and I will save you from their bondage, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. I will take you to

Me for a people, and I will be to you a God, and you shall know that I am the Lord, your God, Who takes you out from under the burdens of Egypt." (6:6-7)

The problem is that the very next verse uses what seems to be a fifth expression of redemption: I will bring you to the Land about which I lifted My hand to give it to Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'akov; and I will give it to you as a heritage, I am the Lord. Why, then, do we not drink five cups of wine on the first night of Pesach? (Actually, according to some versions of the gemara [Pesachim 118a], there are five cups!)

Many commentators deal with this question. Some answer that while the first four "redemptions" were everlasting, the fifth was not (for we were eventually exiled from our Land). They claim that the "Cup of Elijah" corresponds to this fifth redemption, because he will complete and eternalize it. Others say that we do not drink a fifth cup because the fifth redemption did not come to fruition through the Jews who left Egypt. Due to the sin of the spies, only their children entered the Promised Land.

The author of Da'at Zekanim MiBa'alei HaTosafot writes:

Four cups correspond to four redemptions... and the fifth cup – that is, for the one who needs to drink it [an apparent reference to Eliyahu] – corresponds to I will bring [you to the Land]. For that, too, is redemption, as people say: "If a master frees his slave and gives him all that he owns, but he does not bring [the slave] to his dwelling place – what has he accomplished?" Similarly, had the Holy One Blessed be He failed to bring us to Eretz Yisrael, what good would the Exodus from Egypt have been?"

The Kli Yakar also gives a beautiful explanation:

[The four expressions of redemption] correspond to four hardships that [the Jews] underwent, as the verse [from the Brit Bein HaBetarim (BeReishit 15:13)] states: 1) Your seed will be a stranger – this refers to being strangers [in Egypt]. 2) In a land not their own – this refers to being distanced from the Shechinah, for one who dwells in Chutz LaAretz is like one who has no God (Ketuvot 110b). The verse juxtaposes being distanced from the Shechinah and being a stranger because one depends on the other. Being distanced from the Shechinah is a result of being a stranger outside the Land, in a place that is far from the Shechinah. 3) And they [Avraham's descendants] will serve them [the Egyptians] – this is an additional [hardship], beyond being a stranger, for a regular stranger is not a slave, at least. 4) And they [the Egyptians] will afflict them [the Jews] – this is an additional [hardship], beyond slavery, for one does not afflict a regular slave for no reason.

So, when it came time to rescue them, HaShem saw fit to save them gradually, little by little. First, He saved them from the most dangerous situation, which is "affliction." Concerning this it says, I will take you out from under the burdens of Egypt, for [the word] burdens refers to affliction... Next, He saved them from slavery, as it says, I will save you from their bondage. Afterwards, He saved them from the least dangerous situation, which is being a stranger. Concerning this it says, I will redeem you etc, for a regular stranger does not have a redeemer... And since the state of being a stranger results in the removal of the Shechinah... it says here that once they are no longer strangers they will be able to cling to the Shechinah. Concerning this it says, I will take you to Me for a people, and I will be to you a God. This implies actual "taking," like a man "takes" [i.e., marries] a young maiden. And since one who dwells in Chutz LaAretz is like one who has no God, it says here, I will be to you a God. And through this closeness [to God], You shall know that I am the Lord, your God, Who takes you out from under the burdens of Egypt – the worst affliction of them all. Then, [the Torah] expounds upon this "taking," by saying, I will bring you to the Land. This is why our Sages instituted the Four Cups on Pesach – corresponding to the salvation from these four evils.

In other words, the Kli Yakar does not view the verse "I will bring you to the Land" as a separate expression of redemption. Rather, he considers it a continuation of the fourth expression: I will take you to Me for a people, and I will be to you a God. How? I will bring you to the Land! For HaShem is truly our God only in Eretz Yisrael.

May we soon be zocheh to witness the final redemption, so that we can all return to our Land and fulfill our ultimate purpose in life – to achieve closeness to God.

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