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Pesach and Beyond
Rabbi Zvi Sobolofsky

Yetzias Mitzrayim - Pesach and Beyond In the kerias haTorah for the last day of Pesach, we are commanded to remember the events of Yetzias Mitzrayim all the days of our lives. What is the relationship between this daily obligation and the annual mitzvah of telling the story of Yetzias Mitzrayim on the night of the Seder? From a halachic vantage point, there are real differences between these two mitzvos. According to the Rambam, one must mention the mitzvos of pesach, matza and maror in order to fulfill one's obligation of telling the story on Pesach night. Other Rishonim are of the opinion that the mentioning of these three mitzvos is not an integral part of the story but rather enhances these mitzvos themselves. Even according to the Rambam there is no need to speak about these mitzvos on a daily basis. Rav Chaim Soloveitchik noted that unlike the daily obligation, the story at the Seder must be told in a question-answer format. Additionally, the Pesach story is related by contrasting the negative state of slavery and paganism that were replaced with freedom and worship of Hashem. Every day, however, we simply make a quick reference to the basic event of Yetzias Mitzrayim but do not elaborate upon it as we do at the Seder.

Although these daily and annual obligations are different, there is an important connection between them. Rashi comments on the mitzvah of remembering Yetzias Mitzrayim daily that this is accomplished by eating matza at the Seder. How does the once a year matza enable us to remember Yetzias Mitzraim daily?

The Rambam describes the feelings one should have at the Seder, and considers viewing oneself as if he/she is leaving Mitzrayim to be the essence of the Seder night experience. The Rambam cites as the source the passuk concerning Shabbos that we should view ourselves as slave who have been

freed. How can a passuk concerning Shabbos be the source for how to observe the Pesach Seder?

By linking the unique night of the Seder to the daily and weekly remembrances of Yetzias Mitzrayim, the Torah is instructing us how to draw inspiration throughout the year. Every day and every night when we make a quick reference to Yetzias Mitzrayim, we should think back to how inspired we were at the Seder. Similarly, when we recite Kiddush on a weekly basis and declare Shabbos is a remembrance to Yetzias Mitzrayim, we should conjure up memories of the Kiddush we recited at the Seder.

The relationship between annual mitzvos and daily ones is not unique to remembering Yetzias Mitzrayim. The mitzvos of the Yomim Noraim are similarly once a year obligations whose themes reverberate throughout the year. Tekias shofar for Rosh Hashannah is a dramatic once a year way that we declare that Hashem is the King of the world. As we make a similar declaration twice daily by reciting Shema, we should draw on the Rosh Hashanna experience. Similarly, although Yom Kippur provides the greatest opportunity for teshuva, teshuva is not limited to the dramatic day of Yom Kippur. Every day when we ask Hashem for forgiveness in our tefillah, we should try to remember the state of teshuva that had been reached during the tefillah of Yom Kippur. The yomim tovim of Succos and Shavuot also have intense experiences of rejoicing in Hashem's presence and appreciating the great gift of Torah. Yet, every day we should experience joy in the service of Hashem and appreciation for His Torah. Once again, we can attain these feelings by drawing on the great moments of these yomim tovim.

Since the yomim tovim set the tone for the entire year, it behooves us to take maximum advantage of these special days. How we commemorate Pesach will impact on every Shabbos of the year, as well as every day and night. The experience of eating matza on Pesach can last the entire year. As we approach Pesach, let prepare to make the most of every moment of the yom tov. The memories have to inspire us for the entire year.

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Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim **Rabbi Mordechai Willig**

Rabbi Mordechai Willig is a Rosh Yeshiva at RIETS and Rabbi of the Young Israel of Riverdale. This article is adapted from a lengthier one in Zichron Harav, where all the references can be found.

The Gemara states that women are obligated to drink the four cups at the Seder, as well as to fulfill the mitzvos of megilla and ner Chanuka, despite the exemption of mitzvas aseh shehaz'man grama, because they, too, were saved by the miracle. Rav Soloveitchik z"tl explained that these three mitzvos do not merely commemorate miracles, but rather their very essence involves the publicizing of the miracle, pirsumei nisa. Therefore, only these three mitzvos, and not matza, sukka, tefilin, and others which commemorate yetzias mitzrayim, are incumbent upon women. The Rav z"tl added that this special character of these three mitzvos is reflected in the extra bracha, she'asa nisim, recited when they are performed. On Pesach, however, we do not say she'asa nisim. This question was raised by Rabbi Yosef Tov-Elem in the Yotzer for Shabbos Hagadol. He answers that the bracha of ga'al Yisroel recited in conjunction with the hagada renders she'asa nisim redundant. These mitzvos of pirsumei nisa defy other exemptions as well. The Mishna obligates a pauper to drink the four kosos, even if charity funds must be used, whereas for other mitzvos aseh one need not spend more than one fifth of his money. The Rambam extended this ruling to ner Chanuka, and, presumably, it would apply to megilla as well. Similarly, one must drink the four kosos even if it is somewhat harmful, although he may be exempt from other mitzvos that harm him. Finally, pirsumei nisa in the case of the megilla, overrides

even Talmud Torah d'rabim, while other mitzvos do not. Having defined the category of mitzvos of pirsumei nisa and its unique halachos, the question remains: Why did chazal create this category? Is there any precedent in the Torah itself?

The Chinuch rules that women are commanded to perform the mitzvah of sippur yetzias mitzrayim. The Minchas Chinuch asks, shouldn't the exemption of z'man grama apply? Perhaps these two questions answer one another. The Mitzvah of sippur yetzias mitzrayim, which, in its very essence is publicizing a miracle, is the paradigmatic Torah mitzvah of pirsumei nisa. If so, the Chinuch correctly assumes that women are obligated, as evidenced by the three rabbinic mitzvos patterned after sippur yetzias mitzrayim. This relationship emerges from the Yotzer which establishes ga'al yisroel, which is recited after sippur yetzias mitzrayim as the bracha of she'asa nisim on Pesach. Perforce, sippur yetzias mitzrayim is also a mitzvah of pirsumei nisa. Although the rationale of the Chinuch's ruling is thus explained, his source remains questionable. Some suggest that sippur yetzias mitzrayim is connected to Matza (lechem she'onim alav etc.). Therefore, women, who must eat matza, which is juxtaposed to chometz, must also fulfill sippur y"m. The Tashbetz links a woman's obligation in mitzvos of pirsumei nisa to her requirement to offer a Korban Pesach, which is derived from the word "nefashos." If so, this might be the source of her obligation of sippur y"m which is related to Korban Pesach as well (Va'amertem Zevach Pesach etc.).

Similarly, the Netziv derives the obligation of a poor person to offer the Korban Pesach from the same pasuk, and bases the rabbinic requirement that even a poor person drink the four kosos on this Torah obligation. Presumably, one would also have to spend more than one fifth of his money to fulfill sippur y"m. There appears to be a contradiction in the Rambam whether women are obligated in the mitzvah of sippur y"m. Perhaps, there are two halachos of sippur y"m: an independent mitzvah, from which women are exempt as a z'man grama, and sippur y"m as an aspect of matza or Korban Pesach, which is incumbent upon women. The Rambam, therefore, does not mention sippur y"m in the list of mitzvos women must perform even though they are z'man grama. However, he also omits sippur y"m from the list of mitzvos aseh from which women are exempt since, as a practical matter, they are obligated. These two separate halachos of sippur y"m may have their sources in the two pesukim that the Rambam quotes in introducing the mitzvah. Zachor es hayom hazeh precedes the mention of matzo, and is an independent mitzvah. V'hagadol l'bincha, which follows matzo, refers to sippur y"m as related to matzo. For this reason, the second part of the posuk, ba'avur zeh, refers to matzo which must be present when sippur y"m is fulfilled.

This duality emerges from the two Mishnayos which describe sippur y"m. The first describes the lengthy recounting of slavery and Exodus, while the second begins with Raban Gamliel Omer, linking sippur y"m to Pesach, matza and maror. Remarkably, the Rambam rules that the matzo is not on the table until the second part, confirming that the first part, derived from Zachor, is independent of the mitzvah of matzo.

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

This analysis could explain the Rama's custom of reciting the Hagada until

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

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

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subject: Rabbi Reisman's Chumash Shiur - Audio and Print Version

Rabbi Reisman - Shabbos Pesach 5775

1. As we prepare for Shabbos which is also the beginning of Pesach. I would like to share with you some thoughts regarding Yetzias Mitzrayim and the Haggadah. The first is a Gevaldige thought which was presented to me by Rav Avraham Schwartz, a good friend here in Flatbush. He set out to figure out where Pharoh is called Melech Mitzrayim in the Chumash and where he is just called Pharoh. It was strange to him that the Posuk seems to go back and forth between Pharoh and Pharoh Melech Mitzrayim. What he discovered indicates once again the Shleimus of Torah and the beauty of Torah.

He discovered that Pharoh is referred to consistently as the Melech Mitzrayim until the beginning of the 7th Perek of Shemos. There the Posuk says (ויאמר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה, רְאֵה נִתְחַד אֶלְרִים לְפָרְעָה) Hashem said to Moshe I have put you as the boss over Pharoh. Rashi says (שופט ורודה לרדותו במכות ויסורי) I have placed you above Pharoh. At that point Pharoh is really no longer Melech Mitzrayim. He still has a position of Melech Mitzrayim but he is not the top man of Mitzrayim. Hashem said that Moshe is above him. From there and on Pharoh is not called Melech Mitzrayim even once. Never, always just Pharoh. As Moshe is above him. That is true for the rest of Parshas Va'eira & Parshas Bo, not one Melech Mitzrayim. When they leave Mitzrayim at the beginning of Parshas Beshalach we find in 14:5 (וַיֵּצֵא מֶלֶךְ מִצְרָיִם, כִּי בָרַח הָעָם; וַיִּתְּנֵם יְהוָה, אֶת-לֵב פָּרְעֹה מֶלֶךְ מִצְרָיִם, וַיַּרְדֵּף,) In 14:8 it continues (וַיִּרְדֵּף,) (אֶת־רַגְלֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל). Now Moshe who was above him leaves and Pharoh is again called Melech Mitzrayim. There is no deep Vort here it is just an explanation of the Dikduk of the Lashon Hatorah. Something we know, how Midukdak it is in how Pharoh is referred to by the Torah.

2. I would like to share with you something regarding the Haggadah Shel Pesach and it is a reference to a part of the Haggadah which is maybe inadequately appreciated, certainly until I saw this Vort, this thought, this idea, I didn't appreciate it myself. That is that in the Haggadah we refer to (אָרָמִי אֹבֵד אַבִּי) Arami Oved Avi, to the description of Yetzias Mitzrayim which is described in the Pesukim of (וַיֵּרֶד מִצְרָיִם) (אָרָמִי אֹבֵד אַבִּי). It is really much more than that. It is not just that we mention (וַיֵּרֶד מִצְרָיִם), it is that the Pesukim in the Haggadah from there on take the four Pesukim which are in the Parsha of (אָרָמִי אֹבֵד אַבִּי) and it says a Drasha on each one. So that it begins as follows. After we have the Arba'a Banim and after we pick up the Kos for V'hi She'amda we say (צֵא וְלִמַּד מֵה בַקֵּשׁ לִבְנֵי הָאָרָמִי לְעִשׂוֹת לְיַעֲקֹב) צֵא וְלִמַּד מֵה בַקֵּשׁ לִבְנֵי הָאָרָמִי לְעִשׂוֹת לְיַעֲקֹב; אַבְיָנוּ. שְׁפָרְעָה לֹא גִיּוֹר אֶלָּא עַל הַזְּכָרִים וְלִבְנֵי הָאָרָמִי אֹבֵד אַבִּי; (וַיֵּרֶד מִצְרָיִם) וַיִּגְרַר שָׁם בְּמַתִּי מֵעֵט, וַיְהִי שָׁם לְגוֹי גְדוֹל, עַצּוּם וְרַב אָרָמִי אֹבֵד אַבִּי, וַיֵּרֶד מִצְרָיִם), (וַיִּגְרַר שָׁם), (בְּמַתִּי מֵעֵט), (וַיְהִי שָׁם לְגוֹי גְדוֹל,) (עַצּוּם וְרַב וַיִּגְרַר שָׁם - מִלֵּמַד שְׁלֵא יֵרֵד יַעֲקֹב אַבְיָנוּ לְהַשְׁתַּמֵּעַ). We mention four Pesukim in this Parsha and then the Haggadah goes on to break apart each Posuk. (בְּמַתִּי מֵעֵט - כִּמְהָ שְׁנַאֲמַר: בְּשִׁבְעִים נֶפֶשׁ יָרַד אֲבוֹתֵינוּ מִצְרָיִם), (וַיְהִי שָׁם לְגוֹי - מִלֵּמַד שְׁהָיוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל מְצִינִים שָׁם), (גְדוֹל, עַצּוּם - כִּמְהָ שְׁנַאֲמַר: וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל פָּרוּ וַיִּשְׂרְצוּ וַיִּרְבוּ וַיַּעֲצֻמוּ בְּמַאֵד מְאֹד (אָרָמִי אֹבֵד אַבִּי, וַיֵּרֶד מִצְרָיִם) and (אָרָמִי אֹבֵד אַבִּי).

I saw a beautiful Pshat which comes from the GRA in Tikunai Zohar. The GRA there writes that the Maiseh Avos Siman L'banim. We know that Sefer Beraishis is Maiseh Avos is a Siman to what will happen to their descendants. The Maiseh Avos Siman L'banim of Yetzias Mitzrayim is the story of Lavan. Yaakov Avinu's experiences in the house of Lavan. There are

numerous similarities which the GRA mentions. (וַיֵּרֶד מִצְרַיִם - אָנוּס עַל פִּי (הַדְּבוּר). We say that Yaakov Avinu went down to Mitzrayim (אָנוּס עַל פִּי הַדְּבוּר). Says the same thing about Yaakov going to the house of Lavan. Rashi says that Onus Mipnei Echav. He was sort of forced to leave.

There is another similarity. When Yosef went to Mitzrayim, he went because of his brothers who wanted to kill him. When Yaakov went down to Lavan's house he went because of his brother who wanted to kill him. We mention in the Haggadah that they went down (בְּמַתִּי מְעוֹט) with few in number. (וַיְהִי שָׁם (לְגוֹי גָּדוֹל). The same thing happened with Yaakov. He goes down (בְּמַתִּי מְעוֹט) all alone. (וַיְהִי שָׁם לְגוֹי גָּדוֹל) When he leaves he has Shevatim, he has a large family, and numerous wives.

We find that when Klal Yisrael went down to Mitzrayim they left with wealth (בְּרֶכֶשׁ גָּדוֹל). They took the (רֶכֶשׁ) the wealth of Mitzrayim with them. The same thing with Yaakov. When Yaakov left, he took the wealth of Lavan with him in the different animals that he took. With this we understand a little better why as great a person as Yaakov Avinu was, he would be busy making sure that he had plenty of sheep to take with him. This is because he knew that this was a Maisch Avos Siman L'banim for what would happen to his children later.

The GRA says that (וּבְאֵתוֹת - זֶה הַמְּטָה), that just like Mitzrayim was afflicted through Moshe Rabbeinu using a special stick, the same thing, Yaakov Avinu came to Lavan as it says in Beraishis 32:11 (עֲבַרְתִּי אֶת-הַיַּרְדֵּן) just with a stick. Then he used sticks as it says in 30:38 (אֶת-הַמַּקְלוֹת) (אֲשֶׁר פָּצַל, בְּרִהְטִים, בְּשִׁקְחוֹת הַמִּיָּם) to cause the sheep to be born in a way that would go to him.

When Klal Yisrael leaves Mitzrayim, seven days later Pharaoh runs and catches up to them. The same thing when Yaakov leaves the house of Lavan, Lavan realizes, runs after him and catches up to him seven days later as it says in Beraishis 31:23 (וַיִּשָּׂא אֶת-אֶחָיו, עִמּוֹ, וַיֵּרֶדְוּ אֶתְרֵיו, דְּרָדָה שְׁבַעַת יָמִים).

Another similarity, when Yaakov leaves Lavan's house he runs into Eisav, as in danger. The same thing, when Klal Yisrael leaves Mitzrayim, they run away from Pharaoh, they run away from Mitzrayim, they bang into Amaleik who is Eisav's descendant. So many similarities between the story of Lavan and the story of Yetzias Mitzrayim. Never realized it!

Then there is the biggest one. Yaakov deals with Lavan (ברמאות) with trickery. He says as Rashi brings down in 29:12 (אני אחיו ברמאות) I am his brother in trickery. Klal Yisrael leaves Mitzrayim also with trickery. Both in the borrowing of utensils and in saying as it says in Shemos 5:3 (לָקַח נָא דְרָדָה) (שְׁלֹשֶׁת יָמִים). That we will go for three days. They leave B'ramaus just as Yaakov leaves B'ramaus. Incredible similarities between the story of Yaakov Avinu at Lavan and Klal Yisrael in Mitzrayim. Really incredible similarities. Maybe you can build on it and add more. The lesson is the Maaseh Avos Siman L'banim. It is really the idea of Klal Yisrael doing what was really set as our path by Avraham, Yitzchok, and Yaakov, and therefore, a great similarity between the two of them.

(צא ולמד) The Parsha begins. (צא ולמד) Go and learn about it. We are not marking what Lavan did, we are marking what Pharaoh wanted to do. (צא ולמד מה בקש לבן הארמי לעשות ליעקב אבינו). If you learn the Parsha (לבן הארמי) with Lomdus, with the explanation of the GRA you will appreciate it so much more.

I always wondered why Yaakov Avinu worked day and night. It says in the Posuk 31:40 (הייתי ביום אכלני הרב, וקרח בלילה; ותדד שנת, מעיני) that the heat and the cold bit at him. He offered tremendous Mesiras Nefesh for Lavan. Maisch Avos Siman L'banim for the Avdus which Klal Yisrael had when they were in Mitzrayim. So as you see, (צא ולמד) there is a lot to learn. Maybe around the table you can come up with other additional similarities.

3. We are told in Shemos 12:13 (וַיִּרְאֵהוּ אֶת-הַדָּם, וַפְסַחְתִּי עֲלֵכֶם) HKB"H sees the blood and that blood is the Zechus in which Klal Yisrael leaves. Yet we say in the Haggadah (וְאָמַר לָךְ בְּדַמִּי חַי, וְאָמַר לָךְ (בְּדַמִּי חַי). That the Dam Milah and the Dam Pesach together were the

Zechus with which Klal Yisrael left Mitzrayim. Yet it seems that it was only the Dam Pesach that was on the doors.

There is an incredible Targum Yehonasan. Targum Yehonasan says that they mixed the Dam Pesach and the Dam Milah and put it on the Mashkof. We know, that Min B'mino is Batul B'rov. The Dam would be called Dam Pesach because of the Bitul of the small amount of Dam Milah with a great amount of Dam Pesach. Nevertheless, it would make fit well (וְאָמַר לָךְ בְּדַמִּי חַי (חַי, וְאָמַר לָךְ בְּדַמִּי חַי). This also gives us a little bit of extra meaning to the idea of Hadafas Dam Bris. The requirement of blood being let at the time of the Bris Milah.

Rav Chaim Brisker has an Arichus about Hatafas Dam that it is not incidental to Milah the fact that it bleeds, but essential, it is part of Milah. Being that we are taught that the Dam is that which is part of the Siman, we understand the significance of the Dam Milah.

4. We learn in the Haggadah that they were (שְׁהָיוּ מְסֻבִּין בְּבֵין בְּרָקָה, וְהָיוּ מְסֻבִּים) (בִּיצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם כֹּל אוֹתוֹ הִלְקָה). That they were sitting B'haseiba in Bnei Brak and Mesaprim B'yetzias Mitzrayim. It sounds very much like Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim was said B'haseiba. If so, then it needs a little bit of an explanation because the Mishna Brura in Siman Taf Ayin Gimmel: S'if Kattan Ayin Aleph quotes the Shla not to say the Haggadah B'haseiba. It should be said in great fear. Therefore, it needs some sort of explanation as to why we say in the Haggadah something which is not true at least according to the Psak of the Mishna Brura. It is interesting that the Pri Megadim and the B'air Haitiv in Taf Ayin Gimmel S'if Kattan Chaf Zayin say that only the Kriyas Hallel should not be said B'haseiba. But Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim may be said B'heiseiba.

Perhaps it changes according to each society. In one society Haseiba is Hefkeirus and in one society Haseiba is something which is not a contradiction of Aima and Yir'a. Perhaps in a society such as the Tanaim lived where it was very normal to do Haseiba there was no Chisaron. Only by us where it is not the normal way of doing Haseiba where it is different. Perhaps, this Prat in Halacha changed. After all, it is hard to believe that we eat the Matzah not B'aima Uvi'yir'a? How could the Shla say don't do Heseiba at the Haggadah it is a lack of Aima and Yir'as Hashem? What about eating the Matzah?

It must be that originally it was not a Chisaron of Aima and Yir'as Hashem and therefore, it is suitable to be part of the Mitzvah. By the Matzah were the Takana is to do it that way we can't change the Takana but by the Haggadah perhaps that is where it changes. Maybe that is an explanation.

With this I want to wish everyone an absolutely wonderful and meaningful Chag Hamatzos - Zman Cheirusainu. I am looking forward IY"H on Thursday Chol Hamoed coming up to talk to you again at 2:15. Until then, be Mekayeim so many Mitzvos, so many Mitzvos that we have for this wonderful Yom Tov. And above all, the Mitzvah of Chizuk in our Emunah in our faith which is really the Yesod of Chag Hapesach. A Good Yom Tov to all!

Haggadah of the Roshei Yeshiva II – R Asher Bergman
Zeicher L'Yitzias Mitzrayim - In commemoration of the Exodus from Egypt.
This phrase appears not only in the Yom Tov Kiddush, but also in the regular Shabbos Kiddush, in addition to the phrase in remembrance of Creation. Many commentators ask why Shabbos is considered to be in commemoration of the Exodus from Egypt, since it is, in fact, the Creation of the world that Shabbos commemorates.

R' Velvel Soloveitchik cited two verses in the Torah to shed light on this question. In Shemos 31:13 the Torah tells us: "You must observe My Sabbaths, for it is a sign between Me and you for your generations, to know that I am Hashem, Who makes you holy." A bit later in the same passage (31:16-17) we read: "The Children of Israel shall observe the Sabbath. . . Between me and the Children of Israel it is a sign forever that in a six-day

period Hashem made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed." What do these two seemingly repetitious verses signify?

R' Velvel explained that Shabbos actually has two aspects to it. First, it celebrates the sanctity and choseness of Israel. These conditions came into existence as a result of the Exodus from Egypt, as the Torah declares several times: "I am Hashem, Who took you out of Egypt to be your God . ." (see Shemos 29:46, Vayikra 11:45, 25:38, 26:45, Bamidbar 15:41). This aspect of the Shabbos is shared by the holidays as well; they are clearly commemorations of one facet or another of the Exodus. It is in relation to this aspect that the Torah says You must observe My Sabbaths (Sabbaths in the plural, referring to both the weekly Shabbos as well as the holidays, which the Torah often calls sabbaths as well), for it is a sign. . . to know that I am Hashem, Who makes you holy. That this is so may be seen clearly from the Talmud (Eruvin 96a), which rules that tefillin, which are called a sign (Shemos 13:9), need not be worn on Shabbos and Yom Toy, for the days themselves are signs, and do not need an additional sign. But the fact is that the Torah nowhere describes the holidays as signs! What, then, is the basis for the Talmud's rule? Rashi explains that the reference is to our verse — "it is a sign between Me and you. . ."

The second aspect of the Shabbos is that it commemorates the six-day Creation, an aspect which is not shared by the other holy days of the year. It is in relation to this aspect that the Torah says: The children of Israel shall observe the Sabbath (singular) . . . it is a sign forever that in a six-day period Hashem made heaven and earth.

It is because of these two aspects of the Shabbos that its Kiddush mentions both themes — in remembrance of Creation, and in commemoration of the Exodus from Egypt.

Bishaah Sheyeish Matzah U'Maror Munachim Lifanecha - When matzah and maror lie before you.

.. These words can be understood to mean that there is a requirement to have the matzah and maror present during the recitation of the Haggadah. One of the three Seder foods is not listed here, however — the meat of the pesach sacrifice. Was this omitted simply because the pesach sacrifice has been discontinued for so long, and the text was written to conform with the actual situation as we know it now? Or is there in fact no requirement to display the meat of the pesach during the Haggadah, even in those periods of time when the sacrifice was practiced?

R' Velvet Soloveitchik brought a proof for the first option mentioned. The Ramban wrote a critique of the Rambam's Sefer Hamitzvos, in which he takes issue with several instances of the way the Rambam enumerated the 613 mitzvos. One of the mitzvos omitted by the Rambam is the commandment to praise and thank Hashem (by saying a berachah) for giving us the Torah each time we engage in Torah study. "It would be incorrect," writes the Ramban, "to view this mitzvah as a corollary of the mitzvah to study the Torah, and hence not count it as an independent mitzvah unto itself, any more than one would count the Bikkurim declaration as one mitzvah together with the bringing of Bikkurim, or any more than one would count the retelling of the story of the Exodus as one mitzvah together R' Velvel Soloveitchik brought a proof for the first option mentioned. The Ramban wrote a critique of the Rambam's Sefer Hamitzvos, in which he takes issue with several instances of the way the Rambam enumerated the 613 mitzvos. One of the mitzvos omitted by the Rambam is the commandment to praise and thank Hashem (by saying a berachah) for giving us the Torah each time we engage in Torah study. "It would be incorrect," writes the Ramban, "to view this mitzvah as a corollary of the mitzvah to study the Torah, and hence not count it as an independent mitzvah unto itself, any more than one would count the Bikkurim declaration as one mitzvah together with the bringing of Bikkurim or any more than one would count the retelling of the story of the Exodus as one mitzvah together with the eating of the pesach sacrifice." The Ramban, then, draws a parallel among these three pairs of mitzvos: the recitation of a blessing over Torah

study and Torah study itself; the recitation of the Bikkurim declaration upon bringing the Bikkurim to the Temple and the bringing of the Bikkurim itself; the recitation of the story of the Exodus at the Seder and the eating of the pesach sacrifice. It is clear from this equation that the Ramban considers the recitation of the Haggadah and the eating of the pesach meat to be complementary to each other. According to this, there would certainly be a requirement to display the pesach while reciting the Haggadah.

We must conclude that the phrase should have said, "when matzah, maror, and pesach lie before you," but the word pesach was omitted for practical reasons.

(It is interesting to note that there are several versions of the Haggadah text in which the statement does indeed include the word "pesach" together with "matzah and maror.")

<http://dinonline.org/2015/04/02/seder-night-shiurim/>
Rabbi Yehoshua Pfeffer

Seder Night Shiurim April 2nd, 2015 58

Many of the mitzvos special to Seder Night involve eating or drinking. These are the mitzvos of the Four Cups, Matzah, Marror, Korech, and Afikoman. An important part of Seder Night is knowing how much we need to eat or drink for each of these mitzvos, and the time frame in which we must be eat. In this article we will present a guide to the correct amount that one should eat or drink, and the respective time frames. In particular, we will focus on the amount known as a kezayis, which is the basic unit for most eating-related mitzvos. As we will see, determining the amount of a kezayis, which literally means the volume of an olive, is not as simple as it might at first seem.

An Olive as Half an Egg?

The mitzvos of Seder Night that require eating all require that we eat a shiur – amount – of a kezayis.

The exception to this is Karpas (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 573:6), which does not require a kezayis because there is no obligation of halachic eating, but only to make a change from the ordinary, prompting children to ask why this night is different. (One should eat less than a kezayis of Karpas in order to avoid the need to recite a brocho acharonoh.)

The smallest amount of food that is considered eating in halacha is a kezayis (see Toras Kohanim 12:2). A kezayis is a measure of volume, and is unrelated to weight (Rambam, Commentary to Mishnah, Taharos 3:4; Chazon Ish 39:17). The Mishnah states that it refers to the size of an average olive (Keilim 17:8).

Determining the amount of a kezayis would appear to be fairly simple: It is the volume of an average olive. Yet, the Rishonim clarify that this is not as simple as we might think.

The Gemara (Yoma 80a) writes that a person can swallow the volume of an egg at one time. In addition to this, the Gemara elsewhere (Kerisus 14a) states that a person can swallow up to two kezayis amounts at one time. Tosfos (Eiruvim 80b; Yoma 80a) infers from this that the volume of an egg is twice the volume of an olive, so that an olive – a kezayis – equals half an egg (see also Magen Avraham 486).

Today's olives are approximately one-ninth the volume of today's eggs – far less than one-half (see Sefer Kezayis p. 24). Since olives were clearly far bigger (at least relative to eggs) in the times of Tosafos, it appears that (according to Tosafos) we cannot determine the size of a kezayis using today's olives as a measure – unless we assume that the halachic amount decreases with the decline in the size of olives.

The historical decline in the size of olives emerges from the conclusion of Tosafos. According to the Rambam, however, there is no proof that our olives are any different to those of earlier times.

The Rambam does not explicitly discuss the size of a kezayis, but it can be inferred from his rulings concerning the size of a halachic meal (this is especially relevant for purposes of an Eruv). According to the Rambam's

rulings, the volume of bread for two meals is six eggs, which is equivalent to the volume of eighteen dried figs (Laws of Eiruvim 1:9; based on the Mishnah, Eiruvim 82b, and Gemara Eiruvim 80b; This equivalence is disputed by Tosafos.). The volume of a dried fig is thus one third of the volume of an egg.

We know from the Gemara elsewhere (Shabbos 91a) that that an olive is smaller than a dried fig (this is clearly true for our olives). According to the Rambam, it thus follows that a kezayis is less than one third of an egg.

In fact, according to the Rambam a kezayis might be far smaller than one third of an egg, and this is what we would conclude based on today's olives. However, out of doubt, the Rambam's opinion is generally referred to as being one third of the volume of an egg, and this is the amount one must eat (according to the Rambam) to ensure that a kezayis is consumed.

The Size of an Egg: A Great Decline

In actually determining the volume of an egg, the simplest way is to use the displacement method: Place an egg into a full container of water, and measure the volume of water displaced.

This is in fact the method that the Shulchan Aruch recommends (Orach Chaim 456:1; see Yoreh De'ah 324:1).

A second, more elaborate method is based on the relationship of an egg to a revi'is – a halachic measure of volume specific to liquids. A revi'is is the volume of one and a half eggs; in other words an egg is two-thirds the volume of a revi'is (Rambam, Laws of Mikvaos 6:13).

The Gemara (Pesachim 109a) states that a revi'is is the size of a container measuring two fingerbreadths by two fingerbreadths by 2.7 fingerbreadths, where each fingerbreadth is the width of an average person's thumb measured at the joint or at the widest part of the thumb near the joint (see Daas Torah, Treifos 38:115; Shut Iggros Moshe, Orach Chaim 1:136; Mishnah Berurah 11:19). Two-thirds of this volume is the volume of an egg.

One great complication in the kezayis issue arose when the Tzelach (Pesachim 116b) compared these two calculations. He figured the average thumb-width to be 2.55 cm (1 inch) and, using the above formula, the result came to approximately 120 cc (4.1 fluid oz.). He also measured eggs using the water displacement method above, and found that they measured slightly less than 58 cc (2 fluid oz.). In other words, the volume of actual eggs was just under half the volume of the thumb-measurement egg!

The Tzelach therefore reasoned that one of two things must have happened. Either people's thumbs are larger than they had been in the time of the Gemara (so that his actual egg measurement was correct while his thumb-measurement was too large), or eggs grew smaller in size than they had been in the time of the Gemara (so that his thumb-measurement was correct while his egg measurement was too small).

In deciding between these two options, the Tzelach makes the following assumption: "It is well known that succeeding generations diminish, and do not increase." It follows that the change must be in the eggs. Thus he coins the famous expression *niskatnu habaitzim* (eggs have decreased in size). If the size of a thumb remained the same, the size of eggs diminished by one-half since the time of the Gemara.

Accordingly, thumb measurements are the more accurate method for calculating the true baitza, and all shiurim dependent on the size of eggs, including the revi'is (one and a half eggs), the kebeitza (one egg), and the kezayis (one-half or one-third of an egg), must be measured with thumb-measurements. Should they be measured with present-day eggs, the volume must be doubled. For example, a revi'is, which the Gemara states is the volume of 1.5 eggs, is actually the volume of three present-day eggs.

In fact, the Tashbatz (3:33) already preceded the Tzelach, and stated that thumb-measurements are much larger than egg-measurements, so that "it is fitting to be stringent concerning Torah mitzvos."

Dissent on the Decline of Eggs

Many authorities have disagreed with the Tzelach's assertion. This clearly emerges from those authorities who advise to measure the volume of an egg by displacement of today's eggs (Shulchan Aruch 456:1; Magen Avraham

210:2; Shulchan Aruch HaRav 456:1; see also Aruch HaShulchan, Orach Chaim 168:13 and Yoreh De'ah 324:5), and it is stated explicitly by several Poskim.

In Shaalos U'teshuvos Teshuva Me'ahava (no. 324) the author – a disciple of the Tzelach – argues that the Tzelach used his own thumb, which was actually far larger than the average thumb, as a measure. (Now, as well most people's thumb measures about two centimeters.) This resulted in an overly large thumb-measurement. This was also the opinion of Rav Chaim No'eh. The Aruch HaShulchan (Yoreh De'ah 324:6) takes the opposite approach, namely that the eggs in the Tzelach's area were smaller than average.

Rav Dovid Feinstein (Haggadah Kol Dodi 2:5) suggests that the size of eggs remained constant, while thumbs actually grew – contrary to the Tzelach's assertion that "succeeding generations diminish." According to this approach, one may of course use the present-day egg measurement, for it is the thumb-measurement that is now inaccurate. Rav Dovid Feinstein does not reject the Tzelach, but only explains a possible rationale of those who do.

Finally, some Poskim writes that even if eggs or olives diminished in size since the time of the Gemara, this does not affect the shiur of a kebeitza or kezayis. This is because amounts based on eggs or olives depend on the eggs or olives of each generation and are not a fixed amount (Shut Beis Shlomo, Orach Chaim 107; Shut Beis Yitzchak, Yoreh De'ah 2:133; Shut Chasam Sofer Orach Chaim 181; Shiurei Torah 5:1 from Chesed LeAvraham; Shut Iggros Moshe, Yoreh De'ah 3:61 and Orach Chaim 1:136).

According to this approach, one should use present-day eggs and olives to measure the relevant shiur, even if the result does not concur with that of thumb-measurements. Rav Chaim No'eh writes in many places that the common custom in Europe was to rely on these amounts, and not to follow the stringency of the Tzelach (though the Steipler has written that the custom was specifically to follow the Tzelach's stringency).

On the other hand, some Poskim agree with the Tzalach's ruling (see Maaseh Rav 105 and 74; Shaarei Rachamim (nos. 62 and 165); Rosh Efraim 3:16; Maharam Schick, Yoreh De'ah 199). As we will see below, many contemporary authorities rule that one must take his opinion into account, especially for Torah mitzvos.

Contemporary Rulings

To summarize, two main issues must be resolved in determining the amount of a kezayis: 1. Whether a kezayis is one-half or one-third of an egg; 2. Whether a kezayis should be measured with present-day eggs or with thumb-measurements.

Most authorities rule that for Torah mitzvos, one should eat an amount equal to half an egg (in line with Tosafos), whereas for a rabbinic mitzvah one may eat an amount equal to a third of an egg (see Shulchan Aruch HaRav, Aruch HaShulchan and Mishnah Berurah, all 486:1).

The Mishnah Berurah adds that for a rabbinic mitzvah that requires a brachah, such as Maror, one should be stringent and eat an amount equal to half an egg. Some (such as the Mishnah Berurah and Aruch HaShulchan) add that where it is not difficult, one should eat an amount equal to half an egg even for rabbinic mitzvos.

As for using today's eggs or thumb-measurements, the Mishnah Berurah rules that for Torah mitzvos one should use the larger thumb-measurement sizes (the Tzelach's stringency), whereas for rabbinic mitzvos one can rely on present-day eggs (486:1; Biur Halachah 271:13; the Mishnah Berurah finds the Tzelach's stringency difficult because of the measure of a melo lugmav).

The Chazon Ish (39:8 and 17), however, ruled that for all shiurim, including the kezayis, one should follow the Tzelach. However, the Chazon Ish applied the ruling as stringency, since in principle he maintained that the basic shiur depends on the average olive of each generation (Shiurin shel Torah 11).

Rav Chaim Kanievski testifies that the Chazon Ish actually used this amount for rabbinic mitzvos, eating an amount of one-third of a present-day egg (which equals 17 cc – still considerably larger than a present-day olive; see letter printed in Mikraei Kodesh (Harari), p. 572, concerning Maror; see also

Kezayis Hashalem, Chap. 11). However, for a revi'is (the Four Cups) the Chazon Ish used the thumb-measurement volume.

Rav Chaim No'eh maintains that there is no discrepancy between the volume of a present-day egg and that of thumb-measurements.

There is of course far more to be written concerning the different opinions on shiurim, and much research has been conducted in recent years involving such matters as the weight of ancient coins (due to the Rambam's reference to the Egyptian Dirham), the size of a Mikvah, and much besides. For more information, the reader is referred to Rabbi Dovid Braunfeld's *Moznei Tzedek*, from which much of the material above is adduced.

We will continue to the practical guidelines for Seder Night.

Actual Shiurim

Based on the foregoing analysis, we know that the measures of an etzbah (fingerbreadth), revi'is, kebeitzah and kezayis are all interrelated. We also know that an amah (cubit) equals six tefachim (Eiruv 13b), which in turn equal 24 etzba'os (Bechoros 39b), so that even the amah and tefach are interrelated with the other shiurim.

The Chazon Ish based his measurements on the amah. He writes (39:8) that the shiur of an amah used in Europe was 22.8 inches (58 cm; note that this is considerably longer than the length from a person's elbow to the tip of his middle finger; see Rashi on Kesubos 8b and Menachos 11a).

Based on an amah of 58 cm, a revi'is will be 5.1 fluid oz. (150 cc; see *Shiurim shel Torah*, Mitzvos 18). An egg without its shell is 3.0 fluid oz. (90 cc), and a kezayis is one-half or one-third of this. The volume of the egg is approximately twice that of present-day eggs. From this the Chazon Ish concluded that the halachah follows the stringency of the Tzelach.

However, the measures given by Rav Chaim No'eh were used for many centuries in Sefardic communities (see *Shut Or LeZion* Vol. 3, no. 3, sec. 4; *Yecheveh Daas* 4:58), and it was also the long-established minhag Yerushalayim (see *Introduction to Shiurim shel Torah*; see *Biur Halachah* 271:13 concerning the custom outside Israel). When the Chazon Ish introduced his shiurim (based on the Tzelach), Rav Chaim No'eh defended the older custom with a series of books, so that the shiurim thus became known as Rav Chaim No'eh's shiurim.

These shiurim were based on the revi'is, which the Rambam writes contains the volume of water displaced by 27 Dirhams (*Commentary to Mishnah*, *Edios* 1:2). The Dirham is an Arabic coin which has been in use in Middle Eastern countries from the times of the Geonim (the early Middle Ages), and which continues to be in use in some countries today. The weight of the water displaced by one Dirham is 3.205 grams. A revi'is of water (27 Dirhams) thus weighs 86 grams, and its volume is 86 cc (2.9 fluid oz.).

A revi'is is thus a volume of 86 cc (*Shiurei Torah* 3:6), so that the volume of the various kebeitzas including the shell is 1.95 fluid oz. (57.6 cc) and without the shell 1.82 fluid oz. (53.8 cc). A half-egg kezayis is therefore 0.87 fluid oz. (25.6 cc; *Shiurei Torah* 3:12), and third-of-an-egg kezayis is 0.58 fluid oz. (17.3 cc). Concerning matzah, Rav No'eh advises that one should eat 0.97 fluid oz. (28.8 cc), to account for matzah particles that remain stuck between the teeth.

These measures correspond well with the volume of present-day eggs.

Rav Dovid Feinstein calculated the measurements based on both present-day eggs and thumb-measurements. His measures for actual eggs are very close to the shiurim given by Rav Chaim No'eh. Based on fingerbreadths (which he based on Rav Moshe Feinstein's amah), a revi'is was calculated as 4.42 fluid oz. (131cc), an egg as 2.94 fluid oz. (87 cc), and one-half and one-third of an egg as 1.5 fluid oz. (44 cc) and 0.98 fluid oz. (29 cc), respectively.

The following are thus the mitzvah measurements.

Matzah

This is a Torah mitzvah, and the *Mishnah Berurah* writes that one should therefore follow the stringencies of both the Tzelach (thumb-measurements) and Tosfos (half an egg). The largest thumb-measurement size for an egg is that of the Chazon Ish (3.38 fluid oz. or 100 cc). A kezayis is half of this, which amounts to 1.69 fl. oz. (50 cc). Note that according to the Chazon Ish,

the shiur is one-third of an egg, which is 33cc. As noted above, according to Rav Chaim No'eh the shiur is 0.87 fl. oz. (25.6 cc), though he advised eating 0.97 fluid oz. (28.8 cc) to account for matzah that might get stuck between teeth.

Although the *Shulchan Aruch* states that one who is eating from the three matzos on ke'ara should eat two kezaysim (475:1), for this halachah a kezayis of one-third a present-day egg is sufficient, so that the large kezayis noted above is sufficient to fulfill this, too.

Korech

Korech is a rabbinic mitzvah, fulfilled by eating a kezayis of maror and a kezayis of matzah together. One can therefore use the smaller shiur of a kezayis, meaning one third of a present-day egg. The largest contemporary opinion for this shiur is that of Rav Chaim No'eh, amounting to 0.65 fl. oz. (19.3 cc).

According to some authorities one should use half-egg kezaysim even for a rabbinic mitzvah, which will amount to 0.97 fl. oz. (28.8 cc).

Afikoman:

One should preferably eat two kezaysim for Afikoman (see *Mishnah Berurah* 477:1). Since this is a rabbinic mitzvah, one may use the small kezayis of one third of a present-day egg, so that two such kezaysim total 1.28 fl. oz. (37.8 cc). According to the basic halacha, one need only eat one kezayis (*Shulchan Aruch* 477:1): 0.65 fluid ounces (19.3 cc).

Maror:

The basic shiur is equivalent to that of Korech. However, the *Mishnah Berurah* rules (as noted above) that because a berachah is recited, one should use a half-egg kezayis of 0.97 fl. oz. (28.8 cc).

Note that the easiest way to actually measure the matzah and other shiurim is by weight. For hand matzah, the largest shiur is approximately 29g of matzah, and the smallest shiur is 11.2g. For machine matzah (which has a different density) the amounts are 31.0g and 12.0g, respectively (amounts taken from *Moznei Tzedek*).

Four Cups

The *Mishnah Berurah* (*Biur Halachah* 271:13) rules that because the mitzvah of Four Cups is rabbinic, one can rely on the smaller shiur, which amounts to 86cc. However, when Pesach falls on Shabbos (as this year), the first of the Four Cups is also used for Kiddush, which is a Torah mitzvah. The *Mishnah Berurah* rules that this Cup thus requires the larger volume 5.1 fluid oz. (150 cc).

According to the Chazon Ish, one should use this larger volume for all cups. We want to wish everyone an enjoyable and kosher Pessach

fw from hamelaket@gmail.com from: Ohr Torah Stone
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Pesach – First Day Rabbi Shlomo Riskin

Efrat, Israel – The Passover Seder we will be soon be celebrating is an evening dedicated first and foremost to the relationship between the generations, to parents communicating to their children the agony and the ecstasy of Egyptian enslavement and exodus – that seminal biblical drama which most profoundly forged our Israeli identity and traditions. Indeed, the masterful booklet that tells the tale and structures (“seder” means order) the entire evening is called the Haggada (literally, telling), from the biblical verse “And you shall tell your children [vehigadeta] on that day” (Exodus 13:3).

But what if your children – or one of your children – is not interested in hearing? What if he or she is willing to participate in the meal, but is totally tuned out of and turned off to the ritual that surrounds and informs the meal? How are we, the parents, teachers and communicators, supposed to respond in such a case? The Haggada is not only a text of the Egyptian experience; it is also a masterful guide to the art of effectively parenting-communicating the message of our mesora (tradition). By its very place as the centerpiece of

a much-anticipated evening dedicated to the performance of many commandments – commandments that parents are to experience together with their children – we learn that we can only successfully impart a value that we ourselves believe in and act out; children will learn not by what we say, but by how we perform.

Moreover, our children-students must feel that they are the prime focus of the evening, and not mere adjuncts to an adult happening; and the message must be molded in such a way as to respond to their questions and concerns (Maggid begins with the “Four Questions”). Each individual must be given the opportunity to ask his/her questions and to receive answers appropriate to both question and questioner (note the “four children” of the Seder). Finally, the atmosphere around the table must be more experiential than cerebral, punctuated by familial stories and the fun of games (hide-the-afikoman), and warmed by wine, food and love. Such is the Haggada’s formula for effective communication between parents and children – not just one evening a year, but every single day of every year.

But what of the apathetic, uninterested child? One of the four prototypical children of the Seder is the “wicked child,” whom the author of the Haggada designates as such because of the biblical question ascribed to him: “What is this service [avoda] to you?” (Exodus 12:26) Why does the Haggada assume a negative attitude on the part of this child, who is merely seeking a relevant explanation for a ritual he doesn’t understand? The Haggada’s answer to this child also seems unduly harsh. “‘What is this service to you’ – and not to him. And because he took himself out of the historic Jewish community, he denied the basic principle. And so you must set his teeth on edge [hak’heh], and tell him, ‘It is because of this [ritual] that God did for me [so many wonders] in taking me out of Egypt’ (Exodus 13:8). ‘God did for me’ and not for him! Had he been there, he would not have been redeemed.”

The seemingly abrasive response of the Haggada seems to be the very opposite of everything we’ve been positing: Set his teeth on edge! Does this mean (God forbid) rap him in the mouth? And why switch from second person to third person in the middle of the dialogue? First the Haggada reads, “And you tell him,” and then concludes – as if you aren’t even speaking to him – “Had he been there, he would not have been redeemed.”

Has he been closed out of the family Seder? I believe that the most fundamental message of the Seder – indeed, of family dynamics, of classroom management and of national policy as well – is to be inclusive and not exclusive, to make everyone feel wanted and accepted rather than rejected or merely tolerated.

Indeed, it is in the context of the response to the wicked child that the Haggada teaches that the most basic principle of our faith is to include oneself – as well as everyone who can possibly be included – within the historical community of Israel, to be part of the eternal chain of Jewish being, to be a member of the family. Therefore, the problem with this child’s question is not his search for relevance; that is to be applauded and deserves a proper response. The problem is that he has excluded himself from the familial-national celebration; he sees it as applying to “you” and not to “him.”

The author of the Haggada tells the head of the family, when confronted by a child who excludes himself from the family ritual, to “hak’heh” his teeth; not the familiar Hebrew form hakeh, which means to strike or hit, but rather the unusual Hebrew hak’heh, which means to blunt or remove the sharpness by means of the warmth of fire (Ecclesiastes 10:10; B.T. Yevamot 110b). Tell him, says the author of the Haggada, that although we are living thousands of the years after the fact, God took me – and him/her as my child – out of Egypt, because we are all one historic family, united by our family celebrations and traditions. Tell him that the most important principle of our tradition is to feel oneself an integral part of a family that was once enslaved and is now free – and to relive this message of the evils of slavery and the glories of freedom, because if they happened to our forebears, it is as if they happened to us. Since we were formed by them, we are them and they are us. And so is he/she.

And don’t tell it to him matter-of-factly by rote or harshly with animus. Tell it to him with the flame and passion of fire that blunts sharp iron, with the warmth and love of a family that is claiming and welcoming its own as one who belongs – no matter what. Encourage the child to take part in and feel a part of the familial- national celebration. Then, but only then, will the child feel redeemed.

And why the switch from second person to third person? Perhaps the child asked this question, and left the table. He spoke and ran, leaving you no choice but to address him as a third person no longer in your presence. What do you do then? I would suggest that when we open the door for Elijah, it is not in order to let the prophet in. After all, anyone who can visit every Jewish Seder more or less simultaneously will not be obstructed by a closed door. I believe that we open the door – in the spirit of the herald of redemption who will restore the hearts of the children to the parents and the parents to the children – in order for us to go out, to find the “wicked child” and lovingly restore him to the family Seder table. This is the greatest challenge of the Seder night.

Shabbat Shalom and Chag Sameach!

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Passover in Krakow

My grandfather’s Passover Seder, hiding from Nazis in the Krakow Ghetto.

by Yakov Brachfeld

A raging fire burned through Europe through the years 1939 – 1945, destroying European Jewry. Mendel and Moshe Brachfeld – my great uncle and grandfather – were two brothers who walked through the fires of the Holocaust together. After the rest of their family was killed by the Nazis they made a pact that they will stay together any cost. They survived together, grew together and were welded together. These two brothers outsmarted the Nazi machine by staying alive, staying sane, and sticking together, staying strong in their mitzvah observance. They survived the war and rebuilt their lives, raising generations of committed Jews, and today are buried next to each other on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem.

Many survivors were never able to speak about the horrors that they witnessed. My grandfather would never speak of the killing and torture but he would recount as often as he could tales of spiritual growth in the most harrowing of situations. How he and his older brother, with great sacrifice, managed to put on tefillin almost every day in that hell. How they smuggled tefillin from camp to camp, how at one point 500 Jews would line up every morning to put on their tefillin. How they broke open a jail cell and over 100 people were able to escape. How they found a mikva before Yom Kipper and how they survived on only potatoes one Passover. Many stories, all with the same theme – not of horror but of heroism. There is one story that was repeated every year at the Passover Seder – when my grandfather and his brother celebrated Passover in the Krakow ghetto in 1943.

On the Run in Krakow

During World War II, the Nazis established more than 400 ghettos in order to isolate Jews from the non-Jewish population and from neighboring Jewish communities. The Germans regarded the establishment of ghettos as a provisional measure to control and segregate Jews. The assumption behind this separation was to stop the Jews, viewed by the Nazis as an inferior race, from mixing with and thus degrading the superior Aryan race.

Nazi high officials also believed that the Jews would succumb to the unfavorable living conditions of the ghetto, including lack of food, water, and living space. Furthermore, the ghettos served as round-up centers that made it more convenient to exterminate large numbers of the Jewish population later. The Brachfeld brothers were living in in the Krakow Ghetto, one of the bigger ghettos in Poland which was established in March

1941. In March 1943, five weeks before Passover, the Germans liquidated the ghetto either killing or removing all remaining Jews. The great city of Krakow – a city that had been home to Jews for 700 years – was officially declared Judenrein – clean of Jews. The two brothers decided to go into hiding.

The two brothers understood that listening to the Germans surely would lead to their deaths. They decided to go into hiding. In the five weeks leading up to Passover they were caught along with 100 other Jews, and managed to break out of jail. They were running from attic to attic, trying desperately to stay alive and working on getting papers that they could use to escape.

With Passover approaching, the two brothers wanted to find a way to eat matzah on the first night of Yom Tov. It took a lot of inventiveness and sacrifice – getting caught meant getting shot – but they found some flour and built themselves a makeshift oven². They found a blech and some highly flammable paint. They set the paint on fire and were able to kasher the blech – and they had a kosher for Passover oven. They baked a few small matzahs for the Seder. (How the smell of burning paint was not detected by the Germans can either be a miracle or perhaps the stench of dead corpses in the ghetto was so overwhelming that the smell of burning paint was insignificant.)

23 Jozefonsky St. The building where the Seder was held

The night of Passover came and they sat down to their makeshift Seder, celebrating the Jewish exodus from Egypt in a hidden attic on Jozefonsky Street in the Krakow ghetto. In years past they had sat at a beautiful set table with the finest silver and surrounded by family. Tonight they sat down in a dark attic, all alone in the world, running from the Nazis, their very lives in danger, with a bit of matzah for which they sacrificed their lives. Marror was not needed; they had enough of that in their lives.

What Freedom?

My grandfather, then 21 years old, said to his older brother, "There is no way I can have a Seder tonight. The Seder is to celebrate our freedom, our going out of exile, yet here we sit, our lives in danger, our family is all gone, our parents, sister and her kids were all killed, the entire city is up in flames. The Nazis, with their wild dogs searching for us, won't be happy until every Jew is dead. Isn't this worse than the lives the Jews had in Egypt? What kind of freedom are we celebrating tonight?"³ What kind of freedom are we celebrating tonight?

His brother answered, "Every night in the evening prayers we praise God for taking us out of Egypt to an 'everlasting freedom'. The everlasting freedom that we gained and are thankful for isn't a physical freedom – that is only a byproduct of what we got that night. Rather it's the spiritual freedom that we recognize. Passover celebrates the birth of a nation, when we went from being Egyptian slaves to becoming a newly born Jewish nation – a nation that God could call his own. When we sit down at the Seder we celebrate something bigger than life, a going out of slavery into the embracing hands of our Father in heaven, becoming a Godly nation. This is something that no one can ever take away from us. No matter how much they beat, torture and kill our physical bodies, our souls will always remain free to serve God."

With those words the two brothers, my grandfather and his older brother, sat down to a Seder that consisted of dangerously produced matzah and a little bit of borscht in place of wine. My grandfather often said that this was the most magnificent Seder he ever experienced.

1. Jews had been living in Krakow since the 13th century. Many great rabbis through the generations had lived in Krakow including Reb Herschel of Krakow, the Rema and the hassidic master the Meor Veshomish.

2. My grandfather died on the 9th of Nissan 2008, 66 years – almost to the day, when they baked those matzahs.

3 Interesting to note: my grandfather would repeat this story with pride. He was never ashamed to repeat his question and of his initial unwillingness to participate in the Seder. There is nothing wrong with a sincere question that leads to a profound answer.

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<http://rabbisacks.org/covenant-conversation-5768-bo-the-covenant-of-fate/>
Bo (5768) – The Covenant of Fate

Freedom

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks

The sedra of Bo, I have argued, is among the most revolutionary in the entire history of ideas. The reason has less to do with the miracles of the exodus than its message. Three times in the course of two chapters, Moses tells the Israelites about their duties to their children. Even before they have left Egypt, he instructs them to hand on the future generations the story of the events though which they were living.

There has never been a more profound understanding of freedom. It is not difficult, Moses was saying, to gain liberty, but to sustain it is the work of a hundred generations. Forget it and you lose it.

Freedom needs three institutions: parenthood, education and memory. You must tell your children about slavery and the long journey to liberation. They must annually taste the bread of affliction and the bitter herbs of slave labour. They must know what oppression feels like if they are to fight against it in every age.

Freedom is not, as so many have thought, a matter of political or military victories alone. It involves "habits of the heart." Unless children know about Egypt and the exodus, they will not understand the entire structure of Jewish law. They will not grasp the fact that Judaism is an infinitely subtle set of laws designed to create a society of free individuals serving the free G-d in and through the responsible exercise of freedom. The American judge Learned Hand put it well:

I often wonder whether we do not rest our hopes too much upon constitutions, upon laws and upon courts. These are false hopes; believe me, these are false hopes. Liberty lies in the hearts of men and women; when it dies there, no constitution, no law, no court can save it; no constitution, no law, no court can even do much to help it. And what is this liberty which must lie in the hearts of men and women? It is not the ruthless, the unbridled will; it is not freedom to do as one likes. That is the denial of liberty, and leads straight to its overthrow. A society in which men recognize no check upon their freedom soon becomes a society where freedom is the possession of only a savage few; as we have learned to our sorrow.

Freedom lies in what we teach our children. That is what Moses told the Israelites on the brink of their release.

Three times Moses spoke about this subject in Bo:

When you enter the land that the LORD will give you as he promised, observe this ceremony. And when your children say to you, 'What does this ceremony mean to you?' then tell them, 'It is the Passover sacrifice to the LORD, who passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt and spared our homes when he struck down the Egyptians.'

On that day tell your son, 'I do this because of what the LORD did for me when I came out of Egypt'.

"In days to come, when your son asks you, 'What does this mean?' say to him, 'With a mighty hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.'

There is a further passage in Va-etchanan:

In the future, when your son asks you, "What is the meaning of the stipulations, decrees and laws the LORD our God has commanded you?" tell him: "We were slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt, but the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand.

Famously, these four passages became the basis of the four sons of the Haggadah. I want to focus in this study on one of those sons: rasha, the wicked or rebellious child. This is how the Haggadah portrays him:

What does the wicked son say? "What does this ceremony mean to you?" To you, not to him. Because he excludes himself from the community and denies a fundamental principle of faith, so you shall set his teeth on edge and

say to him, “I do this because of what the Lord did for me when I came out of Egypt” — for me, not for him. If he had been there he would not have been saved.

What is going on in this passage? What was it in the nature of the question that led the sages to conclude that the child was rebellious? On the face of it, the query seems innocent. The child is presumably not yet bar mitzvah. He does not yet have obligations in Jewish law. He is therefore asking, rightly, “What does this law, to which you are obligated but I am not, mean?”

There are other perplexing features. What is the fundamental principle of faith the child denies? What, in any case, is wrong with asking? Judaism embodies the profound insight that it is only through the questions we ask, that we learn. How then can it be right to condemn a child for merely making a query, even if it is badly phrased? And how can any parent be so heartless as to say to a child: “if you had been there you would not have been saved?” Clearly, there is more going on in this passage than a superficial reading would suggest.

Rabbi Meir Simcha of Dvinsk, in his commentary *Meshekh Chokhmah*, makes a profound observation. What is significant, he says, is not so much the question as the verb with which it is introduced. In the other cases, the child is described as asking. In this case he is described as saying. You ask a question, you do not say one. It is therefore clear that the child does not wish to know. Instead he wishes not to know. His question is rhetorical. He is not asking, but expressing cynicism. “What is this strange and meaningless ritual?” R. Meir Simcha’s close reading of the text helps us understand why the sages — in attributing this verse to the rebellious child — were in fact listening carefully to the nuances of the verse itself.

The Talmud Yerushalmi offers another approach. It translates the question, “What does this ceremony mean to you?” as “What is this burdensome effort that you impose on us each year?” I suspect that the sages were responding to yet another word in the verse, namely *avodah*, “ceremony.” *Avodah* has a range of meanings often lost in translation. On the one hand it means service — what we are commanded to do for God. On the other, it means slavery — what the Israelites were forced to do for the Egyptians. *Avodah* is a key word in the opening chapter of *Shemot*.

So they, Egypt, made the children of Israel subservient with crushing labour. They embittered their lives with hard servitude in loam and in bricks and with all kinds of servitude in the field — all their service in which they made them subservient with crushing labour.

In these two verses alone, the word *avodah*, in noun or verb form, appears no less than five times (seven times in all in *Shemot* 1-2; a sevenfold repetition is always a sign that the text is signaling a key term). It is what robbed the Israelites of their freedom. Yet the same word is also cited as the key to their liberation:

And God said, “I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain.”

And again:

Then say to Pharaoh, ‘This is what the LORD says: Israel is my firstborn son, and I told you, “Let my son go, so he may worship me.”’

In both cases the term used for “worship” is *avodah*. The meaning of the Yerushalmi is now clear. The son is saying: “What advantage did we gain by the exodus? In Egypt we were *avadim*, slaves. Leaving Egypt we became *avadim*, servants. The only difference is a change of master. Then we served Pharaoh. Now we serve G-d. But that is a distinction without a difference. Either way, we are not free. Either way, we carry the weight of burdensome effort. Then we were subject to Pharaoh’s law, now we are subject to G-d’s law. But do not tell me that *avodah* means freedom. It means the opposite.”

This too is a profound insight. The word *avodah* in the child’s question is significant (especially in contrast to the “wise” son’s terms, “stipulations, decrees and laws,” which focus on the positive aspects of Jewish law in its several varieties). Moreover the Yerushalmi is placing in the mouth of the rebellious child the classic argument that leads, eventually, to the downfall of

societies, namely that the only freedom that counts is the freedom to do what you like. Judge Learned Hand was right when he said, “That is the denial of liberty, and leads straight to its overthrow.” Freud said much the same in his *Civilization and its Discontents*. Civilization, he argued, is the capacity to defer the gratification of instinct. That is one of the central features of a life lived according to *halakhah*.

There is however one source which sheds a new light on the whole passage. It occurs in the *Mekhilta*, a midrashic commentary on *Shemot* dating from the period of the Mishnah:

“I do this because of what the Lord did for me . . .” Why is this said? Because it says, “What does this ceremony mean to you?” This refers to a wicked child who excludes himself from the community, and because he excludes himself from the community, you too should exclude him from the community by saying “I do this because of what the Lord did for me when I came out of Egypt.” Me, not you. And because you have excluded yourself from the community, had you been there [in Egypt] you would not have been saved.

What is striking about this passage is that it only mentions the rebellious child, not the other three. The fact that the source is a very early one suggests that there was a time when the passage relating to the wicked son stood on its own, and was only later incorporated into a larger passage, dealing with four sons, as it appears in the *Haggadah*.

If so, we can place the text in a highly specific historical and halakhic context. There was a time, under both the Greeks and the Romans, during which Hellenistic culture had an enormous appeal for many Jews. They assimilated. They were drawn to Greek art and drama. They took part in athletic competitions. For them Hellenism was cosmopolitan, Judaism merely parochial. Both periods (the Greek in the second century BCE, the Roman in the first century CE) represented crises of Jewish identity, not unlike the one Diaspora Jewry is going through today.

What principle was at stake? During the medieval periods of forced conversions, under Christianity and Islam, the principle was clear. It was apostasy, changing one’s religion. By contrast, Greek and Roman culture — like secular culture today — were not religions (to be sure, they had gods and religious rites, but these did not appeal to Jews. On the contrary, many Romans admired Judaism and adopted aspects of it themselves). What was at stake were styles of behaviour, not modes of belief: assimilation, not apostasy. The individuals concerned were not so much giving up Jewish practice, though doubtless they did that as well, but abandoning Jewish identity. They no longer saw themselves as Jews but as Greek or Roman citizens, Hellenes.

This explains a remarkable ruling of Maimonides. In the course of listing the various categories of sinners, heretics and apostates who “have no share in the world to come” he adds the following:

One who separates himself from the community, even if he does not commit a transgression, but only holds aloof from the congregation of Israel, does not fulfil religious precepts in common with his people, shows himself indifferent when they are in distress, does not observe their fasts, but goes his own way as if you were one of the Gentiles and did not belong to the Jewish people — such a person has no share in the world to come.

Almost certainly, this ruling and the passage from the *Mekhilta* refer to the same phenomenon, namely assimilation as the abandonment of Jewish identity.

Both should be read in the context of yet another passage, this time from the Talmud. The context is conversion — a would-be proselyte who comes to the Beth Din wishing to become a Jew:

Our rabbis taught: if the present time a person desires to become a proselyte, he is to be addressed as follows: “What reason have you for desiring to become a proselyte? Do you not know that Israel at the present time are persecuted and oppressed, despised, harassed and overcome by afflictions?” If he replies, “I know and yet am unworthy,” he is accepted immediately . . . He is also to be addressed thus: do you not know that before you came to

this condition, if you had eaten suet you would not have been punishable with karet; if you had profaned the sabbath you would not have been punishable with stoning. But now, were you to eat suet you would be punished with karet, and were you to profane the Sabbath, you would be punished with stoning.”

What is clear from this passage is that there are two components of Jewish belonging, not one. There is the acceptance of Jewish law (forbidden foods, the Sabbath and so on). There is also, separately, the acceptance of Jewish identity, namely a willingness to be part of the often tragic terms of Jewish history (“persecuted and oppressed”). The late Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik called these, respectively, *brit ye’ud* (the covenant of destiny) and *brit goral* (the covenant of fate). Destiny is what we do. Fate is what happens to us. One is a code of action, halakhah. The other is a form of imagination, the story we tell ourselves as to who we are and where we belong.

There is an abandonment of Judaism that consists in giving up its laws of conduct. But there is another kind of abandonment – no longer seeing oneself as part of the Jewish people, sharing its fate and hope or identifying with the plight of other Jews. That is what Maimonides means by “separating oneself from the community” and its classic source is the passage in the Mekhilta about the “wicked child.” When this passage was incorporated into the Haggadah and became part of an exposition about four kinds of children sitting around the seder table, it became less easy to understand. The children of the Haggadah are, after all, young. They are participating in a religious event. It becomes difficult to understand why one should be singled out for such rebuke. But once we recover the original context – a mature individual who has abandoned his people and become no longer a Jew but a Roman – the text makes sense. It also tells us something profound about Jewish identity.

Judaism is a communal faith. This is the “principle” that the rebellious child denies. Judaism is not addressed to individuals. Nor is it addressed to humanity as a whole. G-d chose a people, a nation, and asked them at Mount Sinai to pledge themselves, not only to Him but also to one another. Emunah, that key word of Judaism, usually translated as “faith,” more properly means loyalty – to G-d, but also to the people He has chosen as the carriers of His mission, the witnesses to His presence. To be sure, Jews are sometimes exasperating. Rashi, commenting on Moses’ charge to his successor Joshua, says that he told him: “Know that they [the people you are about to lead] are troublesome and contentious.” But he also told him: “You are fortunate for you will have the privilege of leading the children of G-d Himself.”

In this fundamental idea there is a measure of hope. To be sure, not all Jews today obey Jewish law. But many who do not, nevertheless identify with Israel and the Jewish people. They plead its case. They support its cause. When Israel suffers, they too feel pain. They are implicated in the fate of the people. They know only too well that “Israel at the present time are persecuted and oppressed, despised, harassed and overcome by afflictions” but they do not walk away. They may not be religiously observant, but they are loyal – and loyalty is an essential part (if only a part) of what Jewish faith is.

From the negative, therefore, we can infer the positive: that a Jew who does not say “You” when Jews or Israel are under attack, but “Me,” has made a fundamental affirmation – to be part of a people, sharing in its responsibilities, identifying with its hopes and fears, celebrations and griefs. That is the covenant of fate and it still summons us today.

Ohel Avraham 5772 Congregation Beth Abraham

The Mitzvah of Hasebah

Chaim Ozer Shulman & Eliezer Shulman

One of the integral parts of the Pesach Seder is the *hasebah*, leaning to one’s side. The source for this can be found in the first Mishnah of *Arvei Pesachim* (Daf 99b), where it says *Lo yochal ad sheyeyseiv* – one should not

eat before doing *hasebah* at the Seder. The Rashbam adds that the leaning symbolizes the freedom we attained upon leaving Mitzrayim. The subsequent Gemara (on Daf 108a) expands upon this Mishnah, saying that *Matzah* requires *hasebah* and *Yayin* needs *hasebah* (at least for 2 of the 4 *kosos*, although we don’t know which 2, so we do all 4 with *hasebah*). Maror, however, does not need *hasebah* because, as the Rashbam explains, Maror symbolizes slavery, not freedom. The Gemarah (Daf 108a) cites in the name of Rabbi Yehoshua Ben Levi that even a waiter must eat a *k’zayos* of *matzah* while leaning in order to be *yotzei* his personal obligation.

The “Brisker Rav” – Rav Velvel Soloveitchik – poses a question. Is the requirement of *hasebah* part of the mitzvot of *matzah* and *yayin* – that one needs *hasebah* to be *yotzei* the mitzvot of *matzah* and *yayin* – or is *hasebah* an independent mitzvah of the Seder, which is to be done at the time of *matzah* and *yayin* but nevertheless a separate mitzvah? The Brisker Rav shows that this question is actually a machlokes between the Rosh and the Rambam.

The Rosh on Daf 108a says that if one ate the *k’zayos* of *matzah* without *hasebah* he has not fulfilled his obligation of *matzah*, and he must go back and eat a *k’zayos* of *matzah* again with *hasebah*. The Rosh brings a proof for his halacha from R’ Yehoshua ben Levi who stated in the Gemarah above that a waiter who ate a *k’zayos* of *matzah* while leaning has fulfilled his obligation. The Rosh interprets this to mean that if he did not do *hasebah* he is not *yotzei* the mitzvah of *matzah* and he must go back and eat the *k’zayos* with *hasebah* (the same is true for wine). This shows that *hasebah* is part of the mitzvah of *matzah* and part of the mitzvah of *yayin*, so the mitzvah of *matzah* and *yayin* would be incomplete without *hasebah*, and one would have to eat the *matzah* and drink the *yayin* again while leaning.

If however, one holds that *hasebah* is its own independent mitzvah, the obligation of *matzah* would have already been fulfilled. Thus, it would not be required – or even possible - to repeat the *k’zayos* of *matzah* since he has already fulfilled his obligation of *matzah*, and any later *matzah* is not *matzah*. Therefore, the mitzvah of *hasebah* would be lost once the mitzvah of *matzah* has already been fulfilled. From the Rosh above we see that he holds that *hasebah* is part of the mitzvah of *matzah*, and without *hasebah* the mitzvah of *matzah* would not be fulfilled.

The Brisker Rav states, however, that the Rambam argues with this and holds that *hasebah* is its own independent mitzvah and is not part of the mitzvah of *matzah* and *arba kosos*. The Rambam says that a person must demonstrate that it is as if he himself went out of Mitzrayim. Therefore when he eats and drinks, he must do so with *hasebah*. The Rambam continues that this mitzvah of *hasebah* is done when he is eating a *k’zayos* of *matzah* and drinking *arba kosos*. This is the minimum shiur of the mitzvah of *hasebah* to lean while eating/drinking the *k’zayos* of *matzah/arba kosos*. But, as the Rambam also states, *shaar achilaso ushesiyaso im heiseiv harei zeh meshubach* - if one leans for the rest of the meal, it is praiseworthy (Hichos Chametz Umatzah 7:8).

The Brisker Rav states that from the fact that the Rambam says that there is a mitzvah if he leans for the rest of the meal, we see that *hasebah* is its own independent mitzvah. If it was merely a part of the mitzvah of *matzah* and *arba kosos* there would be no reason to say that one should learn for the rest of the meal. Also, the Rambam does not mention that one would have to go back if he forgot to eat the *matzah* or drink the *arba kosos* while leaning. According to the Brisker Rav this is because the Rambam holds that *matzah* and *arba kosos* are separate mitzvot from *hasebah*. If one already ate the *k’zayos* of *matzah* or *arba kosos*, he has already been *yotzei* those mitzvot and eating/drinking *matzah/arba kosos* again would accomplish nothing. This is due to the fact that the new *matzah* or wine would not be part of the original mitzvah.

A problem that the Rambam according to the Brisker Rav must deal with is the statement of R’ Yehoshua ben Levi. R’ Yehoshua ben Levi had stated that a waiter who eats a *k’zayos* of *matzah* while leaning has fulfilled his obligation, implying that if he didn’t lean at all, he didn’t fulfill his mitzvah.

This idea seems to contradict the opinion of the Rambam according to the Brisker Rav's explanation, as it seems to show that *hasebah* is not a mitzvah in itself, but rather a part of the mitzvah of *matzah*. For otherwise, why is he not *yotzei* his obligation in eating the *matzah* if he did not do *hasebah*? The Brisker Rav answers this question on the Rambam by suggesting that when it says he has fulfilled his obligation, it is talking about the obligation of *hasebah* and not the obligation of *matzah*. The minimal mitzvah of *hasebah* is to do it by the time of the first *k'zayos* of *matzah* and the *arba kosos*. If one forgot to do *hasebah*, he has still fulfilled the mitzvah of *matzah* and *arba kosos*, but he has missed out on the mitzvah of *hasebah*.

Note that as will be shown below, the Shulchan Aruch and the Rema seem to argue with the Brisker Rav. The Shulchan Aruch quotes the Rosh, saying that those who do not perform *hasebah* while eating the *matzah* and *arba kosos* have not fulfilled their obligation of *matzah* and *yayin* and must go back to eat/drink with *hasebah*. The Rema agrees with the Shulchan Aruch, except that he notes that according to some views, *hasebah* nowadays is not required since people generally do not recline while eating. The Rema then quotes the Rambam, saying that one who performs *hasebah* for the entire meal is praiseworthy.

Two questions arise from this Shulchan Aruch and Rema. First, why does the Shulchan Aruch quote the Rosh regarding eating the *k'zayos* of *matzah* and *arba kosos* without *hasebah* and not state an opposing view if the Rambam really argues? Usually, the Shulchan Aruch takes the side of the Rambam! Second, the Rema seems to be in agreement with the Rosh that one goes back and eats the *k'zayos* of *matzah* and *arba kosos* again, and yet the Rema quotes the Rambam that it is praiseworthy to recline for the whole meal! How can the Rema agree with the Rosh, and immediately quote the Rambam? There seems to be a contradiction in the Rema's opinion, as he agrees with the idea of the Rosh – *hasebah* is a part of the mitzvah of *matzah* and *arba kosos*, yet he quotes the Rambam who seems to say that *hasebah* is a mitzvah in itself.

The Brisker Rav apparently disagrees with the Shulchan Aruch and the Rema, but how exactly does one understand the view of the Shulchan Aruch and the Rema? Where do they stand on *hasebah*?

One must say that the Shulchan Aruch and the Rema hold that the Rambam could be interpreted to hold that *hasebah* is really just a part of the mitzvah of *matzah* and the mitzvah of *arba kosos*. Therefore one would have to go back and eat the *k'zayos* of *matzah* and *arba kosos* if one forgot to do *hasebah*. However, although *hasebah* is part of *matzah* and *arba kosos*, there is a separate *hidur* – a good custom – to do *hasebah* for the rest of the meal since this also shows *cheirus*. This praiseworthy action though is not part of the basic mitzvah of *hasebah*, but a separate *hidur*. In this light, the Shulchan Aruch and the Rema make perfect sense, and they are not *paskening* like the Ashkenazi or Sephardi view. The Rambam and Rosh agree that *hasebah* is an element of the mitzvah of *matzah* and *arba kosos*.

This answers the first and second question above. The Shulchan Aruch still agrees with the Rambam (as he usually does) even though he cites the halacha of the Rosh. For the Rema, there is no contradiction. He agrees with the Shulchan Aruch and the Rosh, and he adds the Rambam's idea that there is a *hidur mitzvah* to be leaning during the rest of the meal, not because *hasebah* is a separate mitzvah from *matzah* mitzvah and *arba kosos* but because there is an additional *hidur* – enhancement – to show *cheirus* during the seder that is separate from the regular obligation of *hasebah* that is part of the mitzvos of *matzah* and *arba kosos*.

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<http://www.ravaviner.com/> Yeshivat Ateret Yerushalayim From the
teachings of the Rosh Yeshiva Ha-Rav Shlomo Aviner Shlit"a

Rav Shlomo Aviner Shlit"a Ha-Rav answers hundreds of text message questions a day. Here's a sample:

Movement to Ascend to Temple Mount Q: How should we relate to the movement to ascend to the Temple Mount which continues to grow and was 22,000 Jews in 5777? A: 1. It is not a movement. It is a minimal number compared to the 2 million Jews who visited the Kotel. 2. It is not 22,000 Jews but 5000 Jews who ascended multiple times. Judaism a Religion? Q: Is Judaism a religion? A: It is a religion, a nationality and an inner identity. The inner identity creates a nation, and it therefore has a religion. Visiting the Kotel According to the Satmar Rebbe Q: I heard that the Rebbe of Toldot Avraham Yitzchak visited the Kotel. He follows the philosophy of the Satmar Rebbe, who ruled that it is forbidden to visit the Kotel because it was liberated by the Zionists (Al Ha-Geula Ve-Al Ha-Temura #107). How could he act in a manner against his Rav? A: 1. You have to ask him directly. I was not appointed the spokesman for Toldot Avraham Yitzchak Chasidim. 2. There are those who claim that the prohibition of the Satmar Rebbe was temporary and has expired, but it is not mentioned in his books (I heard in the name of the Biala Rebbe of Har Yona that he heard from Ha-Rav Menachem Rubin ztz"l, the Admor of Muzai and nephew of the Satmar Rebbe, who discussed this issue with his uncle right after the Six-Day War, that the Satmar Rebbe said explicitly that it is a temporary prohibition and he was in doubt as to the how long it should exist. He said that 5 years is too short, and the maximum is 50 years. 50 years have already passed, so the prohibition has certainly expired. Ha-Rav Yaakov Yitzchak Rabinowitz, the Admor of Dinov, also heard this from the Satmar Rebbe, as well as other Rabbis who have since passed away, and those still among the living, may they live many years. This is what the Biala Rebbe of Har Yona said. However, this is not mentioned in the Satmar Rebbe's books. Furthermore, in his eulogy for Ha-Rav Shmuel Ha-Levi Vosner, the author of Shut Shevet Ha-Levi (who passed away on Pesach 5575), the Satmar Rebbe, Ha-Rav Zalman, related that Rav Vosner told him that he completely followed the original Satmar Rebbe's philosophy and therefore never voted in an Israeli election and never visited the Kotel. The two current Satmar Rebbes also do not visit the Kotel). Tearing One's Name Q: I tore a piece of my paper with my name on it. Is there a spiritual problem? A: No. Paying Taxes Q: We are having a difficult time economically. In an extenuating circumstance such as this, is it permissible not to declare certain income in order to avoid paying taxes? A: No. But ask an accountant if there is a legal and ethical way to relieve the tax burden. Area 51 Q: Is it true that Area 51 in America is connected to aliens? A: Nonsense. It is a secret military area, so people have connected it to all sorts of conspiracy theories. Gratitude to Hashem Q: Should one express gratitude to Hashem for every little thing or only for the big things? A: For every little thing. See Rashi at the end of Bereshit 30:23. Kipa on a Treadmill Q: Do I have to wear a Kipa when I walk on a treadmill? I am not walking 4 Amot (6 feet). A: You are obligated to do so, just as one is obligated to wear a Kipa when he is sitting down (see Mishnah Berurah 2:11). Opening and Closing Window Q: In the dorm, one person is cold and one is hot. How do we decide if the window stays open or shut? A: Figure it out together. This is also good preparation for life, which has many situations like this. Grave of Tzadik Q: Is the grave of a Tzadik holy or impure? A: Both. It is impure for Cohanim and they have to stay away. It is holy since the Tzadik is buried there.

<http://yu1.yu.edu/riets/torah/mussar/abazal1.htm>

Pesach Toafos Harim - Mesores Avos Lechag Hapesach Rav Yechiel Michel Kossowsky

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

People ask: If the children and children's children are wicked, how can

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Velo yeraeh es peney HaShem reykam, ish kematnas yado ... (Torah reading for the last day of Pesach). The Mechilta comments on the passage, velo

yerau es panay reykam Ma simcha haamura leadam berauy lo, af reiyah haamura lagavoha barauy lo (according to the version of the text as amended by the Gaon of Vilna). A man comes before God on this holiday in the wrong mood.

We come with our hands open to receive. We want God to bless us with all manner of blessing, joy, success, health, etc. We want a great deal. What are we ready to give in return? Lo yaraeh es panay reykam! Do not come with empty hands! What kind of gifts can we give the Almighty? A thought about Teshuva... a resolve to live a life where there is more Torah and sincerity in fulfilling mitzvos.... If you want God to grant you gifts barauy lecha, suitable for you, then you must give Him barauy lo, as far as you are able to do so. There are no free gifts here! The Almighty doesn't require a complete personality revolution, but a movement, a new step in His direction, Shuva eylay vaashuva aleychem (Malachi 3). Ish kematnas yado, and according to the value of your gift shall the blessing come from the Almighty, Kebirchas hashem elokecha asher nasan lach.

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

The above Passover thought capsules are translated by Rabbi Nisson Shulman from his book, Toafos Harim, published posthumously by his widow, Rebbetzin Chiena Kossowsky, Aleha HaShalom.

from: torahweb@torahweb.org to: weeklydt@torahweb.org date: Wed, Mar 28, 2018 at 9:44 PM subject: Rabbi Mordechai Willig - Eating to Live

Rabbi Mordechai Willig

Eating to Live

I The very first mitzvah given to every individual of Am Yisrael was the Korban Pesach. As opposed to all other offerings, eating the meat is a separate mitzvah unto itself (Shemos 12:8, Rambam aseh 56). In contrast to other offerings, if it becomes impure and cannot be eaten it may not be offered (Pesachim 78b). Conversely, when the majority of Am Yisrael is impure and the Korban Pesach is brought in an impure state, it is eaten that way since the whole reason to offer it is to eat it (76b).

The Torah teaches us that eating, the most basic human need for survival, can be done before Hashem (Devarim 14:23), as a mitzvah. Although this activity is one which man shares with the animal kingdom (Chagiga 16a), man must elevate his eating to a dignified level.

This is a uniquely Jewish perspective. A non-Jew can offer a sacrifice, but only an olah, which is totally burned on the mitzbe'ach (Menachos 73b). Eating before Hashem does not exist in a bifurcated lifestyle in which worldly actions are not included in religious life.

Esav told Yaakov "Pour into me now some of the red soup" (Breishis 25:30). Rashi writes, "I will open my mouth, and pour a lot into it, as we have learned (Shabbos 155b) we may pour food into a camel's mouth." Rav Yerucham Levovitz (Daas Torah) explains that many laws apply to eating in order to raise it from an animalistic act to a human one. The portion size and the pace distinguish humans from animals. A Jew must eat for the sake of doing Hashem's will, just as we must do when eating kodshim from the mizbe'ach. Woe unto a person whose eating is not superior to that of an animal.

When Yaakov received the berachos instead of Esav, he was told by Rivka to bring meat from the Korban Peach to Yitzchak (Rashi 27:9). Yitzchak planned to give Esav worldly berachos and Yaakov spiritual ones (27:28,29; 28:4). Rivka arranged for Yaakov to receive the physical berachos as well. Her plan was for Yaakov to sublimate earthly matters by including them in avodas Hashem, and this is symbolized by the Korban Pesach which she gave to Yaakov in order to receive, and thereby elevate, worldly berachos (Rav C.Y. Goldvicht). Divine Providence ruled in accordance with Rivka's view (Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik).

II "A tzadik eats to satiate his soul" (Mishlei 13:25). As a rule, the Torah discourages asceticism, and yet running after food is deemed sinful and requires teshuva (Rambam, Hilchos Teshuva 7:3).

Recently, medical science has taught that overeating is injurious not only to the soul but to the body as well. In the U.S., overweightness and obesity are primary causes of mortality and morbidity, perhaps even exceeding smoking (see The Health Risks of Obesity Worse Than Smoking, Drinking or Poverty). The typical eating habits of Orthodox Jews on Shabbos and Yom Tov, especially Pesach, can have negative medical consequences. The Torah prohibits dangerous activities, and this includes smoking (Rav Ovadia Yosef, Yechaveh Daas 5:39). Unhealthy eating is difficult to define precisely, but egregious gluttony, which clearly reduces longevity, is prohibited.

The Ramban (Vayikra 19:1) describes a lustful individual who avoids technical prohibitions as a "naval bereshus haTorah - a degenerate operating within the technical requirements of Torah." "Kedoshim tihiyu - be holy" requires moderation in food and alcohol. If excessive eating or drinking endangers one's health, it no longer is bereshus haTorah. The Rambam (Hilchos Deos 4:1) rules "It is the way of Hashem to be healthy, as illness prevents understanding and knowledge of the Creator. Therefore, one must distance himself from things that harm the body, and conduct himself with things that heal and strengthen. One should not eat unless he is hungry".

Our bodies do not belong to us, but rather to Hashem (Radvaz, Hilchos Sanhedrin 18:6), as we say in Selichos, "...and the body is Yours" (See Leor Hahalacha by Rav S.Y. Zevin, p. 318-328). We are commanded to follow medical advice and avoid dangerous practices. We must eat to livelonger and healthier lives and avoid living to eat, especially if it shortens or harms our lives.

III "You may not break a bone in it" (the Korban Pesach) (Shemos 12:46). The Chinuch (16) explains that it is not honorable for princes to eat like dogs that break bones. To remember the exalted level we reached on Pesach, we must eat like princes would, and not like animals.

The Chinuch famously continues that a person's heart is influenced by his deeds. One should not indulge in the pleasures of those who engage in gluttony and scoffery, as these actions, even if not technically prohibited, affect one's heart and soul negatively.

The Rambam (Hilchos Yom Tov 6:18) states that when one eats and drinks on yom tov, he is also obligated to feed the poor and the stranger (ger). If one does not feed the poor and the embittered souls, his is not a simcha of mitzvah but of his stomach, which is a disgrace.

This can explain the juxtaposition of the subsequent pesukim (12:47, 48). "All of Adas Yisrael shall do it", (the Korban Pesach), including a ger. One who doesn't break bones recognizes that eating should not be gluttonous but refined. Sharing with those who do not have the means assures that all Am Yisrael, including the poor and the ger, will fulfill the mitzvah of Korban Pesach. This elevates the Korban Pesach of the donor, as he eats it like a prince, who bears and feels responsibility to provide for the unfortunate.

The original Korban Pesach was eaten only in one's home (12:46) in a princely fashion (see Chinuch 15). Ideally, the seder should be at home, with extended family and appropriate guests.

For those who, for whatever reason, spend Pesach in hotels, the words of the Chinuch are doubly important. Unfortunately, a culture of overindulgence, reported by participants and reflected in advertisements, can negatively influence a person's heart and soul on Pesach.

True simchas yom tov requires moderation in eating and drinking, the avoidance of idle chatter and scoffing, and significant time learning Torah (Rambam, Hilchos Yom Tov 6:19). In some cases, as the Chinuch writes, this requires resisting temptations and social pressures. For those expending great sums for hotels and/or travel, the amount of money given before Pesach to feed the poor should increase commensurately.

On Pesach 5778, let us all be mindful of the elevated status we achieved on Pesach years ago and thereby merit the rebuilt Bais Hamikdash and the renewal of the Korban Pesach.

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More divrei Torah on Pesach

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