

הגדה של פסח
לשנה הזאת בירושלים!

THIS YEAR IN
JERUSALEM!

Rav Shlomo Aviner
on the
Haggadah

Translated by Mordechai Tzion

Edited by Fred Casden

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How to do your Pesach Cleaning Cheerfully in Less than One Day

Going away for Pesach

If you are going away for Pesach and will not be at home during the entire holiday, you can be lenient and not clean for Pesach. You should sell all of the chametz (leaven) in the house, including all of the crumbs – but not just the crumbs on their own, because that would have no halachic value. It is possible, however, to sell the food in the cabinets and closets including the "chametz dirt." If someone is staying in your house, you need to clean the rooms which will be used. The remaining, unused rooms must be closed off with tape, and you must sell any chametz which is in them.

There is still the question of how to fulfill the mitzvah of Bedikat Chametz (the search for leaven). If you arrive at your Pesach destination by the fourteenth of Nisan, perform the search there. If you arrive on the morning of the fourteenth, you should clean well and check a small room, i.e. the entrance way and not sell the chametz in that room. You must also perform the search for chametz, with a blessing, in the rooms in which you will live during Pesach - if no one else has done so.

Chametz smaller than a "kezayit" (the volume of an olive)

Chametz which is less than a "kezayit" may obviously not be eaten, but it is not included in the Torah prohibition of "Bal Yeira'eh" and "Bal Yimatze" (Chametz may not be seen or found on Pesach – Shemot 12:19, 13:7) (Responsa Igrot Moshe, Orach Chaim 1:145). Regarding the Mishnah Berurah's statement (Sha'ar Ha-Tziun 451:6) that chametz which can be seen is included in the prohibition of "chametz she-avar alav Ha-Pesach" (using chametz that has spent Pesach in a Jew's possession) – the fact is that if it was included in

the sale of chametz, there is no problem (see Mishnah Berurah 142:33 and Chazon Ish, Orach Chaim 117:15). A "kezayit" is 27 cubic centimeters - 3 centimeter square or a little over an inch square. Usually, only rooms in which children are allowed to bring sandwiches or cookies are likely to contain such big pieces of chametz. A room in which people do not walk around with food does not need to be cleaned at all. Incidentally, you must take care not to hide pieces of chametz which are larger than a "kezayit" before "Bedikat Chametz," in case one of the pieces should get lost. If you do not find them, you will not need to bother much to hunt for them, and you can rely on the "bittul chametz" (declaring chametz ownerless) that you do after the search (Responsa Yechaveh Da'at 5:149).

Bedikat Chametz

Only search for chametz in places in which there is a reasonable chance of finding it. It is nearly impossible for chametz which is an inch square to be hidden inside a book! If there is a chance that the book has chametz in it, then it must be thoroughly checked. Most books, however, do not need to be cleaned or checked. Cleaning and checking a sample is sufficient. It is customary not to place books that have not been checked for chametz on the table during Pesach. Everybody knows their kids' habits. Peek, and open here and there. Regarding crumbs in the corners of the house: 1. They are not a "kezayit." 2. They are inedible to a dog. If there is bread behind a cabinet in an unreachable place, nobody will get to it on Pesach and it is as if it is buried – just as you do not have to search under stones or under the house's foundations, since nobody will take chametz from there. By the way, start "Bedikat Chametz" in a place where chametz was used, so the blessing will apply to it.

Educating Children

If you want to do a spring cleaning, this is certainly possible, but not before Pesach – this is not the appropriate time. Pesach vacation is for taking trips, playing with the kids, being happy, dancing and preparing stories for the Seder. A woman works hard all year long: "They enslaved the Jewish women with back-breaking work" (play on Shemot 1:13). If the husband is on vacation too, this may be a good time to leave him with the kids, and give the wife a vacation! That is what vacation is for – not for working like a donkey and scraping floors. You can take trips, enjoy yourself, and arrive at the Seder rested in order to make a beautiful Seder and inspire the children. If a woman wants to work like a donkey, and be a kind of slave, she is permitted to do so, but it is not good educationally. She should be free in order to play with the kids. We left the slavery of Egypt, and it was not to enter into our own slavery! We do not have anything against house cleaning, but you should spread it out over the course of the year – each few months clean another room. This is not the time for projects of cleaning and arranging. In any event, when the Seder arrives there will still be disorder and cleaning that has not been completed.

If a woman is happy with suffering, she is allowed and it subtracts from the suffering of "Gehinom" (purgatory): Any suffering in this world is deducted from the suffering of "Gehinom." If someone desires, this is legitimate, but not before Pesach. The month of Nissan is a happy month.

Husband's help

Question: Does a husband have to help his wife?

Answer: A husband does not have to help his wife nor does a wife have to help her husband. Rather, the two of them have to clean together since this is a shared home, and it is a shared life as well.

Children's Clothes

There may be cookies in your kids' pockets. Even the crumbs must be removed, since a child may put his hand into his pocket and then into his mouth. You only have to check the clothes you will be wearing that season. It is unnecessary to check any clothes that are put away and will not be worn now, such as winter clothes.

Question: It is possible to simply clean them by washing them in a washing machine?

Answer: Running the clothes through a washing machine will not necessarily get rid of all of the crumbs. The clothes must be checked.

Toys

Toys must also be checked. However, you may put some or all of the toys away, and buy new toys as a present for the holiday! This serves a double purpose of saving work and making the children happy.

Bathroom Cabinets

These may contain chametz, such as wheat germ oil and alcohol derived from wheat. What a waste to clean it. Close and tape the cabinets and include it in the sale of chametz.

Couches

You have to check between the pillows. It is an interesting experience to find lost objects.

Books

There is no need to clean them, just do not put them on the table on which you eat. The custom is not to check books for the crumbs that remain in them, but to rely on the nullification (Haggadah Chazon Ovadiah of Ha-Rav Ovadiah Yosef, p. 21). Clean the books that you will want to read at the table on Pesach, or clean a few books for Pesach.

Dining Room

You do not have to clean everything, just the place where people eat, i.e. the chairs and the table.

Chairs: If the chairs are clean, there is no need to clean them. If the kids throw cereal or other things on them and they do not look clean, clean it with a wet rag.

Table: There are two options: 1. Kashering with boiling water. 2. Covering with several layers of plastic and cloth tablecloths.

High Chair

If it is plastic, it may be immersed in a tub with boiling water and cleaning agents. Clean the cracks with a stiff brush. It is unnecessary to take the chair apart, because whatever is in the cracks and holes is inedible to a dog.

Kitchen

This room must be thoroughly cleaned and not one crumb of chametz left. A crumb is not nullified even in a thousand times its volume.

Dishwasher

It is preferable not to kasher a dishwasher. You can do the dishes by hand as in previous generations. It is also possible to use disposable dishes.

Question: Is it at all possible to clean a dishwasher?

Answer: It is possible, but it is a lot of work; there are a lot of rubber parts and connections.

Oven

If you do not have a self-cleaning oven, it is best not to kasher it. Seal the oven and buy baked goods or buy a "wonder-pot" which allows you to bake on a stove.

Stove

Grates: Clean and cover the grates with as much aluminum foil as possible. Use aluminum foil that is thick enough not to tear, but thin enough to bend and shape. What a waste of time and effort! The best thing is to use special Pesach burners.

Burners: There is no need to clean them; they get burned up in the course of use. Bottom Pan (where everything falls): In general, if some food falls into it, we do not pick it up, and it is considered "treif;" nevertheless, put aluminum foil on it.

Knobs: Wipe them clean.

Refrigerator

Clean it, but it does not have to be a lot of work. Of course, defrost the freezer (if you have an older model which does not defrost automatically) and clean it. It is best to eat up all chametz before Pesach, but if expensive chametz food products are left over, i.e. frozen foods, they may be wrapped up well, labeled "chametz," stored in the back of the freezer/refrigerator and included in the list of chametz sold before Pesach.

If you have an old refrigerator with cracks or crevices in the door which is difficult to clean, do not use its inner shelves, but cover them with plastic. Similarly, you must clean the door's rubber part well. If it is old, sometimes it is easier to replace it.

Food Pantry

Do not clean. It is a waste of time. Seal, put sign or sticker not to use and include it in sale of chametz.

Cabinets of dishes, utensils, pots and pans

Dishes, shelves, and drawers that will not be used on Pesach may be sealed, and need not be cleaned. There are those who are strict to clean even the things which are used for chametz, but one can

be lenient on account of three reasons, each of which would be enough:

1. We sell all the crumbs together with the sale of chametz.
2. The dishes are clean – nobody puts a dirty dish away in the cabinet.
3. Even if there is "chametz dirt," it is definitely less than a "kezayit."

By the way, sometimes it is easier to paint than to clean. You can paint the corner of the kitchen where food flies using a water-based paint and the gas grates using aluminum paint.

Microwave

It can be kashered by not using it for twenty-four hours, cleaning it for five minutes and boiling water in it for half an hour. All food cooked or baked in it on Pesach should be placed in a covered vessel.

Counters

It is possible to cover them with thick aluminum foil, and then there is no need to kasher them at all; just wipe them with a rag. Sometimes it is complicated to cover, and then one can kasher it. Where there are holes, pour floor bleach in them and then pour water from an electric kettle which is still boiling. It is good for two people to do this: One to pour and the other to unplug.

Sink

Regarding the kitchen sink, there are a few solutions:

1. Do not put anything into the sink on Pesach, and wash the dishes in the air. This, however, is unrealistic.
2. Put a plastic bin inside. Just make sure there is still a direct flow down the drain.
3. Thoroughly clean and kasher the sink like the counters.

Toaster

It is impossible to clean a toaster, but there is no need. Put it in the cabinet of sold chametz.

Mixer

You have to do "Hagalah" (kashering by dropping into boiling water) for the bowl and blades. As for the body of the mixer, wrap it in plastic – making sure not to block the air holes. The best thing is to buy a cheap hand-mixer for Pesach.

Kashering dishes

This is a tremendous amount of work. It is preferable to buy new dishes. True, it is expensive, so buy a few things each year. As for pots, it is possible to buy cheap aluminum ones which are okay for just seven days. There are cheap plastic plates as well as cheap cutlery.

Car

You have to clean it. Take out the mats and gather the "chametz dirt" – there is no need for a vacuum cleaner – and clean the compartments and containers. There is no need to pour water or dismantle the seats. In general, there is no need to dismantle anything with screws. Any way you look at it – if the chametz is accessible, you can take it out without a screwdriver, and if it is not accessible, it will not come out on Pesach either.

Chumrot - Being Strict

If you know that you are being stricter than Halachah requires, and you choose to be strict, you deserve a blessing. And if you accepted a stricture on yourself and now you want to stop, the way to do that is to do "Hatarah" (getting the vow annulled). But if you thought that a particular act was the actual Halachah, and now you realize

it is a stricture, you do not need a "Hatarah." If you have a strong desire to clean a lot, you deserve a blessing, especially for Pesach; "whoever is strict deserves a blessing." You should not, however, force a stricture on yourself, but accept it with love.

Summary

In light of what is written above, it should take about an hour for the dining room, two to three hours to kasher the kitchen, and another hour to clean the rest of the house. In short, about one day! All the rest of the cleaning jobs are either strictures or just made up. When we work hard, we use up our energy and get mad at the kids. You have to educate the kids – but not to educate them to be aggravated: "I told you not to go into this room anymore! Why did you go in?! Eat on the porch! Eat standing up! Don't touch!" The whole kitchen looks like it was overturned by vandals; the husband and kids are trembling in fear in some corner and eating; the mother looks at them like a drill sergeant; there's anger between husband and wife. This is preparation for Pesach?! This is educating the kids? This is definitely not setting a positive example! Our memories of Pesach should not be of a reign of terror.

If you clean together with the kids, that is great, but it must be a happy adventure. First of all, you have to clean what you must – taking half a day – and after that if you want to do other things, you can clean with happiness and joy. Clean, sing, pour water and "you will clean with joy from the wellsprings of salvation" (based on Yeshayahu 12:3).

The Rama rules in the Shulchan Aruch: "Every person should sweep his room before Bedikat Chametz, and check his pockets for chametz, and the pockets or cuffs where you sometimes put chametz also need to be checked" (Orach Chaim 433:11) The Mishnah Berurah (#46) adds: "It is the custom to sweep the whole house on the

thirteenth of Nisan, so that it will be ready to check immediately after nightfall on the fourteenth." This custom is enough. Beyond that, "whoever is strict deserves a blessing" – as far as Pesach goes, but not as far as the kids go.

It is understood that I am not forcing my opinion on anyone. I am simply stating my humble opinion with explanations. Whoever accepts the explanations will listen and whoever does not accept them will not. I heard most of the practical suggestions about how to shorten the cleaning from women themselves. It is possible that a woman has a strong desire not to shorten this work, and just the opposite, she finds joy in it. That is okay. Even she will benefit from all of the above, because she will not feel pressured that she might violate the Halachah, but rather she will clean with satisfaction and tranquility.

The essential point is the distinction between chametz, which there is an obligation to clean with all the severity of the Halachah, and dirt – which should obviously be removed, but not necessarily before Pesach. You can spread out the work of removing dirt over the whole year, so that we and our families do not suffer before Pesach. I am not advocating poor housekeeping. We should stand before chametz with awe and fear, but not all dirt is chametz. Do not treat chametz cavalierly, G-d forbid, but at the same time, not everything that is accepted as Pesach cleaning is directed at chametz.

Have a kosher and happy Pesach. We should ensure that we have a HAPPY Pesach and a KOSHER Purim. We should arrive at the Seder night neither tired nor aching but happy, so that this night will be a powerful experience for the kids, and a great source of faith in Hashem, the Redeemer of Israel.

"Dirt is not chametz and children are not the Pesach sacrifice!"

ש סדר ז

קִדְּשׁ • וְרַחֵץ • בְּרַפֵּס • יַחַץ •
מִגִּיד • רְחֹצָה • מוֹצִיא • מִצָּה •
מְרוֹר • כּוֹרֵךְ • שְׁלַחן עוֹרֵךְ •
צְפוֹן • בְּרֵךְ • הַלֵּל • נְרִצָּה •

The Order of the Haggadah

*Kiddush ❖ Ritual Hand Washing ❖
Karpas ❖ Yachatz – Breaking the Middle
Matzah ❖ Telling the Story of the Exodus
❖ Ritual Hand Washing for the Meal ❖
Motzi ❖ Matzah ❖ Maror ❖ Korech (Hillel
Sandwich) ❖ The Festive Meal ❖ Afikoman
❖ Birkat Ha-Mazon ❖ Hallel ❖ Nirtza –
Conclusion*

The Order of the Haggadah

Question: Why did our Rabbis create a list of the signs of the Haggadah?

Answer: There are many mitzvot to perform on the night of Pesach, and everything seems arbitrary, without any order. This, however, is not true. There is an exemplary order. The mitzvot of the Torah are wonderfully ordered, just as nature is, and history too has a divine order, even if it is sometimes difficult to see. Everything is connected to this order which has been established by divine will.

Another explanation: We can also explain that when the Haggadah was recited orally, and each person did not have his own written Haggadah, there was a need to list each sign in order to remember their proper order at the Seder.

"Seder – Order"

Question: Why is the ceremony of Pesach night called "Seder – order"?

Answer: It is to teach us that even the miracles and wonders which are performed by heaven exist because of special divine direction of the world, and that the particular order is not a coincidence. Just as nature runs according to a fixed order, miracles, which are beyond nature, also have their own fixed order (Chidushei Ha-Rim according to the Maharal).

Women – Part 1

Question: Why are women obligated in all of the mitzvot of the Seder, when these mitzvot are time-bound and women are exempt from time-bound mitzvot?

Commentary

Answer: They also experienced this miracle (Pesachim 108a-b). Here are two explanations for this answer. According to Tosafot, women are obligated because they were also in Egyptian Exile and were redeemed. According to Rashi, women are obligated because the Jewish People were redeemed on account of the righteous women of that generation. The first soldier in the struggle against Egypt was Miriam. "And I sent before You Moshe, Aharon and Miriam" (Michah 6:4). "You have three great leaders" (Ta'anit 9a). Miriam taught Torah to the women (Aramaic translation to Michah ibid.). She was born during the most difficult time for the Nation of Israel. She was therefore named "Miriam" based on the Hebrew word "merirut" meaning "bitterness." The Egyptians decreed that every baby boy was to be thrown into the river. Amram, the leader of Israel, despaired and separated from his wife, Yocheved. He said: "Why should we bring more children into the world to be killed by the Egyptians?" The entire Jewish People followed his lead and separated from their wives. This would have certainly destroyed the seed of Israel and we would have been defeated without a fight. Everyone yielded except for one six year old girl – Miriam. She said to her father: "Your decree is worse than Pharaoh's. He only made a decree against the boys, but you made a decree against the boys and the girls!" She succeeded in convincing her father; he remarried his wife, and all Israel followed his lead and did the same. At the remarriage of her parents, Miriam danced with her little brother, Aharon, who was two years old. When Moshe was born, Amram was again concerned and wondered if perhaps he acted imprudently. Miriam, however, was confident that there would be a solution and, indeed, Moshe's salvation came in an unexpected way. Even before this event, Miriam showed herself to be a warrior. The Jewish midwives, Shifrah and Pu'ah, who saved the Jewish People, were Yocheved and Miriam. Even though Miriam was young, she helped her mother. Yocheved was called "Shifrah" because she made the

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child beautiful ("meshaperet" which is similar to "Shifrah") and cared for him. Miriam was called "Pu'ah" because she spoke ("Po'ah" which is similar to "Pu'ah), sang songs, and hugged him. When Pharaoh asked Yocheved why his decree to kill the baby boys was not followed, Yocheved evaded the question and said that the Jewish women are skilled at giving birth without a midwife. Miriam, however, spoke brazenly to Pharaoh, "She stuck out her nose at him and said: Woe to the man from whom G-d comes to take retribution. He was filled with anger against her and wanted to kill her. Yocheved attempted to pacify Pharaoh: "Do not pay any attention to her. She is a baby and does not know anything" (Shemot Rabbah 1:13). Miriam obviously understood everything, and she began to organize a rebellion ("meri" which is similar to "Miriam") among the Nation of Israel. Our Sages relate how the women established a powerful underground in Egypt. They would encourage their husbands, give birth in the fields under apple trees, "I roused your love under the apple tree" (Shir Ha-Shirim 8:5), and raise their children in secret. They stubbornly continued to become pregnant and give birth, until they reached six hundred thousand. Including the elderly, women and children, they reached a few million.

At a much later time, during the donations to the Mishkan (desert sanctuary), the women brought copper mirrors as a donation. At first, Moshe Rabbenu refused to accept them, since they were used to focus on the external beauty of women. "Grace is false and beauty is vain, a woman who fears Hashem, she should be praised" (Mishlei 31:30). Moshe was repulsed by the mirrors because they were used by the evil inclination. The Holy One, Blessed Be He, said to him: "Accept them, because these are the most precious to me." Through these, the women created legions of Jewish children in Egypt. These mirrors were not objects of the evil inclination, but of the awe of Hashem. The daughters of Israel beautified themselves with them in order to entice their husbands who were exhausted from the

Commentary

back-breaking work. When Pharaoh decreed that the men would sleep in the field and the women in the city, the women heated up food and brought food and drink to their husbands. They would comfort them and say: We will not be enslaved eternally. Hashem will redeem us in the end. They took the mirrors, and each one would look in the mirrors with her husband and entice him with words...as it says, "I roused your love under the apple tree," and this is how they had children. These mirrors are therefore called "legions of mirrors" ("marot ha-tzovot"), because in their merit, legions ("tzeva'ot") of Israel were born (see Rashi to Shemot 38:8).

Therefore, do not be surprised that after the splitting of the Red Sea, after the Song at the Sea of Moshe Rabbenu, "Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aharon, took the drum in her hand, and all of the women followed her with drums and dances" (Shemot 15:20). They knew that the redemption was on account of their merit, the merit of the righteous women. They danced, they overcame the laws of gravity, they floated in the air, and they were freed from the physical reality of the land. When they left Egypt, they did not even bother to prepare leavened bread, yet they packed drums among their belongings out of the faith that a great salvation would occur and the chance would come to play music to the Master of the Universe, Redeemer of Israel.

Women - Part 2

The Maharal, Rabbi Yehudah Loew of Prague, explained that matzah, maror and the Pesach sacrifice are on account of the merit of our forefathers – Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov, and the four cups of wine are on account of the merit of our foremothers – Sarah, Rivkah, Rachel, and Leah. We left Egypt on account of the merit of our forefathers and foremothers, as it says, "Behold, the voice of my beloved is coming, leaping over mountains, jumping over hills" (Shir Ha-Shirim 2:8). The voice of my beloved is Hashem coming

————— Commentary —————

to redeem us. "Leaping over mountains" refers to the merit of our forefathers and "jumping over hills" refers to the merit of our foremothers (Rosh Hashanah 11a). The four cups also correspond to our foremothers, as it says, "Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine in the recesses of your house" (Tehillim 128:2 – Haggadah of the Maharal on the four cups of wine).

The Maharal also explained that drinking wine can bring one to a level of exaltation, as "wine enters and secrets emerge," corresponding to the exalted level of the Redemption (ibid.). This is appropriate for women who had the inner power of the Exodus, since the Jews were redeemed on account of the righteous women in that generation (see above explanation).

It is written in the Shulchan Aruch: "Firstborn males fast on Erev (the day before) Pesach...and there are those who say that even a firstborn female fasts (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 470), but this is not the custom (Rama ibid.). Some authorities ask: Why don't females fast as well? They were saved during the plague of the first born, which also afflicted females (Mishnah Berurah in the name of the Midrash). The reason that firstborn males need to fast is that, in truth, Israel was not fit to be redeemed from Egypt, since they had sunk to the forty-ninth level of impurity, and the angel of Egypt said: "These [Egyptians] are idol worshippers, and these [Jews] are idol worshippers." The Holy One, Blessed Be He, however, in His great kindness and love, saved us. The firstborn males therefore need to fast, since their salvation was not on account of their own merit. The women, however, had their own merit, "Israel was redeemed from Egypt on account of the merit of the righteous women in that generation" (Sotah 11b). Women, therefore, have no need to fast (Ma'aseh Roke'ach).

Children

Before the Seder, one should pass out nuts or something else tasty

 Commentary

to the children in order to alert them to all of the changes, so that they will ask questions and will not fall asleep (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 472:16 and Mishnah Berurah #50). In any event, a person should make his children happy on the holidays with what is appropriate for them, i.e. different delicious foods (Rambam, Hilchot Yom Tov 6:18).

Charoset

Question: The charoset is a remembrance of the mortar. If so, why is it sweet?

Answer: It is true that the slavery with the mortar was bitter. Our revered teacher, Rav Kook, explained, however, that the purpose of the servitude in Egypt was to prepare us for servitude to Hashem (Olat Re'eiyah vol. 2, pg. 160-161). The Charoset is therefore sweet.

The Egg

Question: The egg is a remembrance of the holiday sacrifice. What is the connection between an egg and the holiday sacrifice?

Answer: The Chatam Sofer pointed out that an egg has a different nature from all other foods. Unlike other foods, the more an egg is cooked, the harder it becomes. The Nation of Israel is the same way. The more is it oppressed with fire and water, the more its faith is forged, as it says, "And just as when they will oppress it, so it will multiply and spread out" (Shemot 1:12).

The Torah does not say "when they oppressed," but "when they will oppress" to teach us that this is what will occur in the future. The more they pursue us to harm us, the stronger and more inured we will become.

Milk for the four cups

Before the beginning of the Seder, the "Beit Ha-Levi" (Rav Yosef Be'er Soloveitchik) received a question from a widow: Is it permissible

ס קדש ס

ישטוף הכוס וידיחנו ומוזגין לו כוס ראשון (ע"י אחר דרך חירות) ונוטלו בב' ידיו ומחזיקו בידו הימנית לבד ומקדש עליו, ויכוין לצאת ידי חובתו קידוש וד' כוסות דמצות צריכות כוונה. ויאמר:

הַנְּנִי מוֹכֵן וּמְזוּמָן לְקַיֵּם מִצְוֹת כּוֹס רֵאשׁוֹן מֵאַרְבַּע כּוֹסוֹת: לְשֵׁם יְחִוּד קוֹדֶשׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא וְשְׂכִינְתָּיה בְּדַחֲלוֹ וּרְחִימוּ לִיחַד שֵׁם י"ה בּו"ה בִּיחֻדָּא שְׁלִים עַל יְדֵי הַהוּא טְמִיר וְנַעֲלַם בְּשֵׁם כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל. וַיְהִי נַעַם אֲדָנִי אֱלֹהֵינוּ עָלֵינוּ, וּמַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵינוּ כּוֹנֵנָה עָלֵינוּ, וּמַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵינוּ כּוֹנֵנָהוּ:

(לשבת ויהי ערב ויהי בקר)

יוֹם הַשְּׁשַׁי, וַיְכַלּוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ וְכָל־צַבָּאָם: וַיְכַלּוּ אֱלֹהִים בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי, מְלֹאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה, וַיִּשְׁבֹּת בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי, מְכַל־מְלֹאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה: וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶת־יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי, וַיְקַדֵּשׁ אֹתוֹ, כִּי בּו שְׁבֹת מְכַל־מְלֹאכְתּוֹ, אֲשֶׁר־בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים לַעֲשׂוֹת:

————— Commentary —————

to fulfill the mitzvah of the four cups with milk? Instead of giving an answer, the Beit Ha-Levi immediately sent her wine, matzah, meat, fish and all kinds of delicious food. He explained: If this is what she asked, it is a sign that she does not have anything in her house, no wine and no meat, since we do not drink milk at a meat meal.

Kaddesh – Reciting Kiddush

The first matter is: Sanctify! There is Kiddush (sanctification) every Shabbat when we enter into the holiness of Shabbat. There is also

Kiddush

Pour the first cup of wine. Each person's cup, including those of the children, should hold a minimum of 86 cubic centimeters (according to Ha-Rav Eleazar Chaim Na'eh) and 150 cubic centimeters (according to the Chazon Ish). One should try to drink the entire amount regardless of the cup's size (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 472:9. Mishnah Berurah #30). We should teach our children to fulfill this mitzvah, just as we teach them to fulfill all others (Olat Ha-Re'eiyah 2, 243).

When the Seder falls on Shabbat we begin:

(in a low voice) And it was evening and it was morning, the sixth day.

And the heavens and the earth and all their hosts were completed.

On the seventh day, G-d finished His work that He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. And G-d blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, for on this day He rested from all His work which G-d had created to do.

————— Commentary —————

Kiddush on Seder night: Leaving Exile - this is holiness. Sanctify! A holy nation was created during the Exodus. This holiness is on account of the Nation's spiritual existence, and, based on this idea, we are commanded to be actively holy. The community is holy, as should be the individual. Sanctify! Know that you are holy, and exert yourself in this realm during your life. The entire Torah revolves around "Be holy" (Vayikra 19:2). The entire corpus of the mitzvot is only on account of "Who made you holy with His mitzvot" (Based on Sichot Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah, p. 44 and his Haggadah, p. 2, 11).

"The Time of our freedom"

Question: What is the connection between freedom and the prohibition of chametz (leaven)? The entire process of ridding ourselves of chametz seems like a heavy burden which robs a person

סְבִירֵי מִרְנֹן וְרִבְּנֹן וְרִבּוֹתַי:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,

בוֹרֵא פְרֵי הַגֶּפֶן:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר בְּנוֹ
מִכָּל־עַם, וְרוֹמַמְנוּ מִכָּל־לְשׁוֹן, וְקִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו,
וְתַתֵּן־לָנוּ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּאַהֲבָה (לשבת שְׁבֻתוֹת לְמִנּוּחָה
(וּמוֹעֲדִים לְשִׂמְחָה, חַגִּים וְזִמְנִים לְשִׂשׁוֹן אֶת־יוֹם
(לשבת הַשְּׁבֻת הַזֶּה וְאֶת־יוֹם) חַג הַמִּצְוֹת הַזֶּה. זְמַן
חֲרוּתָנוּ, (לשבת בְּאַהֲבָה), מִקְרָא קִדְּשׁ, זְכָר לִיצִיאַת
מִצְרַיִם. כִּי בָנוּ בְּחִרְתָּ וְאוֹתָנוּ קִדְּשָׁתָּ מִכָּל־הָעַמִּים.
(לשבת וְשֻׁבֹת) וּמוֹעֲדֵי קִדְּשֶׁךָ (לשבת בְּאַהֲבָה וּבְרָצוֹן)
בְּשִׂמְחָה וּבְשִׂשׁוֹן הִנְחַלְתָּנוּ: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, מִקְדֵּשׁ
(לשבת הַשְּׁבֻת וְ)יִשְׂרָאֵל וְהַזְּמַנִּים:

————— Commentary —————

of his freedom. And in general, all of the mitzvot seem to deprive the natural movements of a person.

Answer: Rav Kook explained that true freedom includes two aspects:

- a. Freedom of the body: Physical freedom from any foreign subjugation: Anything which forces the image of G-d within a person to be subjugated to any other power lessens that person's worth.
- b. Freedom of the soul: Spiritual freedom from anything which turns it from the straightness which is its essential existence. G-d

With your permission, gentlemen:

**Blessed are You, Hashem, our G-d, King
of the Universe, who creates the fruit of
the vine.**

Blessed are You, Hashem, our G-d, King of the Universe, who has chosen us from among all the nations and exalted us above all tongues, and sanctified us through His mitzvot. You, Hashem our G-d, have given us with love [Shabbatot for rest and] festivals for happiness, festivals and seasons for joy: [this Shabbat and this] Holiday of Matzot, time of our Freedom [in love], a holy convocation in remembrance of the Exodus from Egypt. For You have chosen us and sanctified us from all the nations, and You have given us [the Shabbat and] Your holy festivals [with love and favor], in happiness and joy, as a heritage. Blessed are You, G-d, who sanctifies [the Shabbat and] Israel and the festive seasons.

————— Commentary —————

created man upright, and He cleanses man from any inner refuse which sullies his inner holiness.

Regarding these two aspects, each morning we recite the blessing, "who has not made me a slave." The mitzvot are not foreign entities which are forced upon a person; rather, they reveal his inner essence. Before the mitzvot were engraved on the tablets that were given at Mount Sinai, they were written on the "tablets" of every Jew's soul. Our Sages, therefore, said: They were "charut" (engraved) on the tablets – do not read the word as "charut" (engraved) but as "cherut"

במוצאי שבת מוסיפים כאן ברכות הבדלה.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא מְאֹרֵי הָאֵשׁ:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הַמְבַדִּיל בֵּין קֹדֶשׁ
לְחַל בֵּין אֹר לְחַשֶׁךְ, בֵּין יִשְׂרָאֵל לְעַמִּים, בֵּין יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי
לְשֵׁשֶׁת יָמֵי הַמַּעֲשֶׂה. בֵּין קֹדֶשֶׁת שַׁבַּת לְקֹדֶשֶׁת יוֹם טוֹב
הַבְּדִלְתָּ. וְאֶת־יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מִשְׁשֶׁת יָמֵי הַמַּעֲשֶׂה קִדְּשָׁתָּ.
הַבְּדִלְתָּ וְקִדְּשָׁתָּ אֶת־עַמּוֹךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּקֹדֶשֶׁתְךָ. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה
יְיָ, הַמְבַדִּיל בֵּין קֹדֶשׁ לְקֹדֶשׁ:

**בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁהַחֵינּוּ וְקִיַּמְנוּ
וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזִמְן הַזֶּה:**

————— Commentary —————

(freedom) (Pirkei Avot 6:2). By slightly changing the vocalization of the word, we learn an incredible lesson: In order to truly be a free people, it is not enough to be liberated from physical slavery. On the contrary, it is possible to have an enlightened slave whose spirit is full of freedom, and a free person whose spirit is enslaved. We were transformed into free people on Pesach, but we do not become truly free until we rid ourselves of anything which robs us of our natural essence. This is the reason for destroying the chametz, which symbolizes the evil inclination and is called "the yeast in the dough," since it ferments in the heart of people and causes them to transgress (see Berachot 17a). The destruction of our internal chametz is what allows us to raise the flag of freedom (Olat Re'eiyah vol. 2, pp. 244-245).

Questions

1. On which side do we recline? Why?
2. What is karpas?

When the Seder falls on Saturday night, we add here two blessings for Havdalah:

Blessed are You, Hashem, our G-d, King of the Universe, Creator
of lights of fire.

Blessed are You, Hashem, our G-d, King of the Universe, who
distinguishes between holy and profane, between light and
darkness, between Israel and other nations, between the seventh
day (of rest) and the six days of activity. You have made a distinction
between the holiness of Shabbat and the holiness of the holidays,
and You have sanctified the seventh day above the six days of
labor. You distinguished and sanctified Your Nation, Israel, with
Your holiness. Blessed are You, G-d, who distinguishes between
holy and holy.

**Blessed are You, Hashem, our G-d, King of
the Universe, who has granted us
life, sustained us and enabled us to reach this
season.**

Drink the first cup of wine while reclining to the left.

————— Commentary —————

3. What are the ingredients of the "Korech" – the Hillel Sandwich?
4. During the time of the Temple, what did someone do if he missed the Pesach sacrifice?
5. What is the minhag of "Kimcha De-Pischa" (Flour of Pesach)?
6. Is it permissible to search for chametz with the help of a flashlight?
7. What mitzvah did the Jewish People fulfill before leaving Egypt, aside from the Pesach sacrifice and the Seder?
8. What does one have to check for in the lettuce on the Seder plate?

————— Commentary —————

9. Which tribe was not forced to perform back-breaking work in Egypt?

10. Why do we place a shank bone on the Seder plate?

Answers: 1. The left side, because most people eat with their right hand. 2. The vegetable which we eat at the beginning of the Seder to make children ask what we are doing. 3. Matzah and maror. 4. Pesach Sheni – the Second Pesach, which is on the fourteenth of Iyar. He would travel to the Temple and offer the Pesach sacrifice. 5. To give money to the poor before Pesach. 6. Yes, but it is preferable to use a candle. 7. Brit Milah. 8. Worms and bugs. 9. Tribe of Levi. 10. As a remembrance of the Pesach sacrifice.

A Remembrance of the Exodus of Egypt

The Kiddush of Seder night is certainly a remembrance of the Exodus, but this same version is also recited in Kiddush and in the prayers of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, matters which relate to the entire world. Our Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah, explained that the Nation of Israel came into being during the Exodus. Just as a man who is enslaved is not yet a man, so too, a nation which is enslaved is not yet a nation. The new, divine history of the Nation of Israel began with the Exodus. Not only are our special holidays – Pesach, Shavuot, Sukkot – a remembrance of the Exodus, but even Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, which apply to the entire cosmos, are a remembrance of the Exodus (Sichot Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah – Shemot, p. 80). The Exodus is the awesome act from which the entire Torah and the entire world is drawn (ibid., p. 64 and see ibid., p. 126, 146, 283).

The mitzvot do not create the Jewish existence, but transform it from the potential into the actual. All of the mitzvot are therefore a remembrance of the Exodus, the revelation of the inner content which was created during the Exodus.

Commentary

Reciting a Blessing on the Haggadah – Part 1

Question: Why didn't our Sages establish a blessing on reciting the Haggadah, "Who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us regarding the Haggadah"? The basis of reciting the Haggadah after all is a Torah mitzvah, counted among the 613 commandments, as the Rambam writes: "To relate the miracles and wonders that were performed for our ancestors in Egypt on the night of the fifteenth of Nisan" (Rambam, Hilchot Chametz U-Matzah 7:1).

Answer: Many answers have been suggested for this question:

- a. The Rosh wrote: "And regarding the question of why we do not recite a blessing on reciting the Haggadah, The Holy One, blessed be He, commanded us to perform many acts as a remembrance of the Exodus and we do not recite a blessing on them." According to his opinion, there is not an independent mitzvah to recite the Pesach Haggadah. Only if someone asks you about the Exodus must you explain it to them, but if no one asks, there is no need to say anything. In such a case, you perform all of the acts of that night, i.e. eating matzah, etc..., and through these acts you will remember the Exodus. A difficulty on the Rosh's position: It is written in the Mechilta (a text which derives laws from the Torah) that even if no one asks you, you are still obligated to relate the story of the Exodus. A rejection of this difficulty: The Rosh explains that the Mechilta is discussing a rabbinic obligation, but connects it to a verse in the Torah.
- b. The responsa "Besamim Rosh" explained that we do not recite a blessing on blessings and praises, just as we do not recite a blessing on the Birkat Ha-mazon (the blessing after eating). The Haggadah is composed entirely of praises. A difficulty on the position of the "Besamim Rosh": We recite a blessing on Hallel even though it is filled with praises.

————— Commentary —————

c. Rabbenu Yerucham: The blessing on the Haggadah is included in Kiddush when we say, "a remembrance of the Exodus from Egypt."

d. Rashba: We do not recite a blessing since this is a mitzvah which has no known limit. One can fulfill his obligation with one statement, and the more he relates the story of the Exodus, the more praiseworthy he is.

e. The Meiri: We do not recite a blessing since after we recited the Shema in Ma'ariv, we said "Emet Ve-emuna – True and Faithful" which ends "Blessed are You, Hashem who redeemed Israel," and this serves as the blessing. A difficulty on the last three answers: Since the mitzvah is reciting the Haggadah and relating the story of the Exodus, we do not fulfill our obligation by recited Kiddush or with a mere statement.

f. Shibulei Ha-leket: The blessing on the Haggadah is the blessing we recite before eating the matzah, which begins "Who has redeemed us." The Rabbis placed this blessing at the end of relating the Exodus, since if we said "Who has redeemed us" at the beginning of the Seder, we would not go back and discuss the enslavement.

There are additional explanations. The Meiri actually quoted an opinion that we do recite a blessing at the beginning (See Ha-Moadim Be-Halachah by Rav Shlomo Yosef Zevin, p. 279 and Talmudic Encyclopedia vol. 8, p. 179).

Reciting a Blessing on the Haggadah - Part 2

The Rishonim (the Rabbis of the Middle Ages) discussed at length why we recite a blessing on some mitzvot, but not on others. They explained that this is a deep question in which one can become ensnared (Shut Ha-Rashba vol. 1 #18). For example, we do not recite a blessing on a mitzvah between one person and another (Kesef Mishnah on Rambam, Hilchot Berachot 11:2). Some

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authorities explain that we do not recite a blessing on intuitively logical mitzvot, acts which we would perform even if we were not commanded to do so, since our intellect would instruct us to perform them in any case. It is not logical to say "who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us...", since it would be proper to perform these acts even without a command. We therefore do not recite a blessing on giving tzedakah, performing acts of loving-kindness, returning a lost object, visiting the sick, helping someone load or unload their animal, etc...

Rabbenu Bachya similarly wrote: "The accepted mitzvot are the essence of holiness, and our Sages decreed that we should recite a blessing on them 'who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us...'." The Nation is not called a "Holy Nation" for performing the intuitively logical mitzvot, and the Sages therefore did not decree reciting a blessing on them (Kad Ha-Kemach, section on tzitzit; commentary on the Torah, Bamidbar 16:38; Shut Shem Aryeh Orach Chaim #1; Aruch Ha-Shulchan, Choshen Mishpat 627:10).

Based on this idea, the Sefat Emet, the Gerrer Rebbe, explained that the reason that we do not recite a blessing on relating the Exodus from Egypt is that even if we were not commanded to do so, our intellect would obligate us to do so. This is based on a story in the Gemara (Pesachim 116a): Rav Nachman asked his servant, "What should a slave say if he is released by his master and given silver and gold?" The servant responded, "He should thank and praise him" (Sefat Emet, Vayikra 32:1). We learn from here that this is proper conduct even without a divine command.

The Holiday of Matzot (the plural of "matzah")

The name "The Holiday of Matzot" appears in the Torah (Shemot 23:15 and Vayikra 23:6), but our Sages used the term "The Holiday of Pesach" as in the tractate of the Mishnah "Pesachim." Rabbi Levi

זרחי

נוטל ידיו עד פרק הזרוע לטיבול ראשון כדין דבר שטיבולו במשקה ולא יברך על הנטילה.

————— Commentary —————

Yitzchak of Berdichev said that Hashem boasts about Israel, and Israel boasts about Hashem. "His glory is upon me, and my glory is upon Him" (Anim Zemiroth – poem recited in many synagogues on Shabbat and holidays). This is based on the Gemara where it is said that just as Israel wears tefillin which contain praises of Hashem, so too does Hashem wear tefillin which contain praises of Israel. It says in our tefillin, "Hear Israel, Hashem our G-d, Hashem is One" (Devarim 6:4) and it says in Hashem's tefillin, "And who is like Your Nation Israel, one Nation in the Land" (Shmuel 2 7:23 – Berachot 6a).

The term "Pesach" is a praise of Hashem based on "The Holy One, blessed be He, passed over (Pasach) over the houses of our father in Egypt" (Haggadah), and had mercy on us. The term "The Holiday of Matzot" is a praise of Israel based on "Our fathers' dough did not have time to rise" (Haggadah), because they quickly left Egypt to fulfill Hashem's command, as it is written: "I remember the kindness of your youth, the love of your betrothal, when you went after Me in the desert" (Yirmiyahu 2:2). Rashi explains: "What is 'the kindness of your youth?' You followed after my messengers, Moshe and Aharon, you left a settled land for the desert and without provisions, because you believed in me." We mention Hashem's praise and Hashem mentions our praise as a realization of "I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine" (Shir Ha-Shirim 6:3 – see Tosafot Chadashim at the beginning of Massechet Pesachim).

Kadesh Urchatz – Reciting Kiddush and Ritually Washing Hands

The usual order of serving Hashem is "turn away from evil and do

Ritual Hand Washing

The hands are ritually washed without a blessing.

————— Commentary —————

good" (Tehillim 34:15). One first purifies himself from evil and then he climbs the levels of holiness. "You shall purify and then sanctify" (Vayikra 16:19). In the important ethical work "Mesilat Yescharim – The Path of the Just" by Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto, the section on cautiousness precedes the section of alacrity and, all the more so, the section on holiness. During the Exodus, however, the Master of the Universe did not wait until we repented, sanctified ourselves, and were suitable to be redeemed. Rather we were redeemed and sanctified before we were purified from the impurities of Egypt – in haste (Devarim 16:3). On Pesach, we therefore first sanctify by reciting Kiddush and only then purify ourselves by ritually washing our hands, since by "doing good" we arrived at "turn away from evil" (The Sochotover Rebbe, the author of "Avnei Nezer").

Urchatz – Ritually Washing Hands

This is a special washing. Washing before prayer and eating bread is an absolute obligation, but the Jewish People also sanctified itself by washing before eating something dipped in a liquid (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 158:4). Washing one's hands before eating bread – a fixed meal – is a known practice to Jews everywhere, but here there is a second level which is considered to be like a fixed meal: Not just eating a vegetable, but eating a vegetable dipped in a liquid. Eating a vegetable is considered casual eating, but when it is dipped into a liquid it is considered to be fixed. Before eating karpas, which we dip into salt water, we wash our hands, but do not recite a blessing on it. During the course of the year, we are not particular about this washing, aside from great Torah scholars and righteous and holy people. Our Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah,

————— Commentary —————

taught us that on Seder night we are all exalted to an aristocratic, supreme level. Every Jew is the child of kings (Shabbat 67a). Every Jew glorifies himself and is more particular about the mitzvot than usual (Be'er Heitev, Orach Chaim 473:17). "Urchatz – Ritually Washing Hands" establishes a Jew's approach to food: There is a need to be pure (Rabbenu Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah, *ibid.*, p. 15, 68).

In general, we must remember that the end does not justify the means. The goal itself must be pure, and the means to arrive there also needs to be pure. In fact, purity of how we arrive at something creates the exalted status of the goal itself. This is true both in the life of an individual and in the life of the Nation. Regarding an individual, the goal of enjoying food can only come after washing, the purification of water. Then we are not concerned about filling an appetite which is contaminated. The Nation as well – which will come to a wonderful, wide-open Land, filled with goodness – must first pass through the fiery furnace of purification, through slavery and bitterness of life, with straw and mortar and all sorts of back-breaking work. Then it will not degrade itself in its Land with a base nationalism. Instead, the Nation will raise itself to a supreme level of being "a kingdom of priests and a holy Nation" (Olat Re'eiya vol. 2, pp. 257-258).

Question: During the entire year, why aren't most Jews particular about ritually washing their hands before eating something dipped in a liquid?

Answer: The reason is that this practice is a dispute between the Rishonim (Rabbis of the Middle Ages) whether such an obligation still exists after the destruction of The Temple, when the laws of purity and impurity have not been enforced. We therefore do not recite a blessing at the Seder, except according to the opinion of the Vilna Gaon. It is indeed true that the Nation is not particular about this washing during the course of the year. The Taz – in his

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commentary on the Shulchan Aruch - said surprisingly: Why is this night different from all other nights? For on all other nights we are not careful about this washing, but on this night everyone is careful. If one purifies himself more on this night then shouldn't it also be the practice during the Ten Days of Repentance, when we are particular about many issues which we teach lightly during the rest of the year (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 473:6 quoted in the Be'er Heitev *ibid.*)? The Netziv answered: On this night we perform acts as a remembrance of what Pesach was like during the time of the Temple, and this includes the ritual washing of hands in this case (commentary on the Haggadah). According to the above words of our Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah, we can also answer: We are more particular because on this night we are the children of kings; all of us are supreme, spiritual aristocrats. Some also explain that the reason for this washing is like all of the other changes which we perform on this night in order for the children to ask (Chok Yaakov). Others explain that the washing is a remembrance of the Pesach sacrifice when the Temple was standing (*ibid.*).

Questions

1. What was Moshe's age during the Exodus?
2. What special prayer is recited during the prayers on Pesach?
3. What is "yachatz" and why do we perform it?
4. Why do we remove a few drops of wine when we recite the Ten Plagues?
5. What is shemurah (guarded) matzah?
6. What is the name of Aharon's wife?
7. What was eaten in the Temple during the Seder which is not eaten today?
8. What is the name of Miriam's husband? What is her son's name?

שַׁבְּרַפְּס

יקח מהכרפס פחות מכזית וטובלו בחומץ או במי מלח ומברך בורא פרי האדמה, ויכוון לפטור בברכה זו גם המרור, וז"ל השלה"ק טיבול ראשון כרפס כדי שישאל התינוק וישיבו לו עבדים היינו וכו' ויוציאנו, כי כרפס אותיות ס' פר"ך רמז לס' רבוא שהיו בעבודת פרך, והטיבול בחומץ כי כן היו משעובדים תחת מעוול וחומץ, אמנם ענין הטיבול בעצמו הוא דרך חירות כדרך שהשרים נוהגין עכ"ל, ויברך:

**בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
בוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָאֲדָמָה:**

שַׁבְּיַחַץ

יבצע מצה האמצעית לשנים והחלק הגדול יצפין לאפיקומן, ונותנין אותו במפה זכר למשארותם צרורות בשמלותם (רוקח וטור), ויש שמשימין על שכמם זכר ליציאת מצרים (מג"א), ויצניענו בין כר לכסת תחת מראשותיו, וחצי השני יניח בין ב' השלימות לומר עליו הגדה, כמו שדרשו רז"ל לחם עוני שעונין עליו דברים הרבה, לחם עוני מה דרכו של עני בפרוסה אף כאן בפרוסה:

————— Commentary —————

9. What is the meaning of the word "Pesach"?

10. When does the prohibition of eating chametz (leaven) begin?

Answers: 1. Eighty. 2. The prayer for dew. 3. Breaking the middle matzah in two pieces, since poor people eat pieces of bread. 4. So that the plagues do not happen to us. 5. It is matzah which is specially guarded from any moisture. Some say from the time of harvesting, others say from the time of grinding. 6. Elisheva bat Aminadav. 7. The Pesach sacrifice. 8. Her husband is Calev and her son is Chur. 9. Hashem passed over the Jewish firstborn and had mercy on the Jewish homes (see Rashi to Shemot 12:13). 10. Erev (the day before) Pesach at the end of the fourth hour into the day.

Karpas

A vegetable is dipped in salt water. We recite the blessing of "Ha-Adamah" and then eat less than the volume of an olive. We do not recite a blessing after eating the karpas.

Blessed are You, Hashem, our G-d, King of the Universe, who creates the fruit of the ground.

Yachatz — Breaking the Middle Matzah

The middle matzah is broken in two. The larger half is wrapped in a napkin and hidden away for the Afikoman. The smaller half is placed between the other two whole matzot.

————— Commentary —————

Yachatz – Breaking the Middle Matzah – Part 1

Question: The small piece which we place between the two full matzot is poor people's bread, since the way of the poor is to eat small pieces. This seems strange. This is the time of our freedom, not a time of poverty. It is a time of prosperity and pleasure, "and you shall eat and be satisfied" (Devarim 8:10), "those who take pleasure in it will inherit eternal honor" (Musaf Shemoneh Esrei of Shabbat); Hashem does not despise the body, and we have nothing to do with asceticism (Shemoneh Perakim of the Rambam, chapter 4). Why then do we divide the matzah, and limit and minimize?

Answer: Before we reach the level where all of our human actions are exalted to a holy level, we must limit and minimize the animalistic side which exists within us. We must place a restraint on our natural tendencies, and even the tendency of eating, in order to prosper without limit. Before we reach the level in which the eating itself is

ס מגיד ס

יאמר ההגדה בשמחה ויכווין לקיים מצות עשה דאורייתא של סיפור יציאת מצרים.

הַנְּנִי מוֹכֵן וּמְזוּמָן לְקִיּוֹם מִצְוֹת סִיפּוּר יְצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם: לְשֵׁם יְחֻד
קוּדְשָׁא בְּרִידָּהּ הוּא וְשִׁכְיִנְתִּיהָ בְּדַחֲלוֹ וּרְחִימוּ לְיַחַד שֵׁם י"ה בּו"ה
בִּיחּוּדָא שְׁלִים עַל יְדֵי הַהוּא טְמִיר וְנַעְלָם בְּשֵׁם כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל.

וְיִהִי נַעַם אֲדָנָי אֱלֹהֵינוּ עֲלֵינוּ, וּמַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵינוּ כּוֹנֵנָה עֲלֵינוּ, וּמַעֲשֵׂה
יְדֵינוּ כּוֹנֵנָהוּ:

הָא לַחֲמָא עֲנִיא דִּי אֲכָלוּ אַבְהַתְנָא בְּאַרְעָא
דְּמִצְרַיִם. כָּל דְּכִפֵּין יִיתִי וְיִכּוֹל, כָּל דְּצָרִידָּהּ יִיתִי
וְיִפְסַח.

הַשְׁתָּא הַכָּא, לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בְּאַרְעָא דְיִשְׂרָאֵל. הַשְׁתָּא
עֲבָדִי, לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בְּנֵי חוּרִין:

————— Commentary —————

our supreme service to Hashem, like the eating of sacrifices (see Mesillat Yesharim, chapter 26), we must limit ourselves to the necessary amount of pure and clean eating for the existence of our bodies, and out of this, we will reach the supreme, holy level (see Olat Re'iyah vol. 2, pp. 259-260).

Yachatz – Breaking the Middle Matzah – Part 2

The Shulchan Aruch wrote: "He should take the middle matzah and break it in two, giving half to one of the people who is at the Seder. That person should place it under the tablecloth to guard as the afikoman" (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 473:6). The Mishnah Berurah (#59) explained that it is a remembrance of the verse, "their leftovers bound up in their clothes on their shoulders" (Shemot

Telling the Story of the Exodus

The second cup of wine is poured.

Lift the plate with the matzot and say in a loud voice:

This is the Bread of Affliction that our fathers ate in the land of Egypt. Anyone who is hungry, come and eat. All who are needy, come and eat the Pesach sacrifice. This year we are here, next year in the Land of Israel. This year we are slaves, next year we will be free people.

————— Commentary —————

12:34), and there are some who have the custom to place the matzah on their shoulders as a remembrance of the Exodus.

Question: Why do we hide the afikoman?

Answer: The simple answer is in order that it not accidentally be eaten. The Sefat Emet, the Gerrer Rebbe, explained, by way of an allusion, that the Exodus was a preparation for all of the redemptions which follow, until we arrive at the Complete Redemption, which is still hidden and will be revealed in the future. The Maharal, Rabbi Yehudah Loew of Prague, similarly wrote that the Exodus has the future Redemption hidden in it (introduction to Netzach Yisrael). Our revered teacher, Ha-Rav Kook, also explained: The redemption continues on. The redemption from Egypt and the complete Redemption are one unending action, the action of Hashem's strong hand and outstretched arm, which began in Egypt, and continues to work in every circumstance (Orot, Israel and its Revival #28).

This is the Bread of Affliction

Question: It seems that this statement was established during the time of the Exile as indicated by the statement "Next year in the Land of Israel." If so, we can ask, why didn't they establish it before

————— Commentary —————

the destruction of the Temple in order to remind us that our ancestors ate this bread in Egypt?

Answer: Rav Kook explained that this statement was not created to remind us so much of the past, but to provide us with faith and hope for the future. It is to ensure that our spirit will not fall when we mention our liberation from slavery, when we ourselves, at this very moment, are in an exile of slavery, a bitter exile. What then is the benefit of the Exodus to us? We therefore remember that we ate the bread of affliction in the past, but we were redeemed, and we will be redeemed in the end. We must eat the matzah joyously, because we believe and trust that even though we are slaves now, we will be free people in the Land of Israel speedily in our days (Olat Re'eiyah vol. 2, pp. 261-262).

Poor People's Bread

In a general sense, poverty is not a good thing. The difficulties of poverty separate a person from his will and his Creator (Eruvin 41b). There are times, however, when poverty can serve as an introduction to receiving the Torah. If a person is wealthy, and does not lack anything, he is capable of deteriorating and adopting destructive character traits, and to think that his false thoughts and outlooks are completely true. Poverty, however, can instill humility within a person. The concern of the daily struggle for bread can raise him to concern for the Eternal One, and from the midst of this, he can receive the supreme light of faith. Based on this idea, we can understand why the Zohar calls "lechem oni – poor people's bread" by the name "nahama de-mehimnuta – bread of faith" (Zohar, Tetzaveh 183, 1. Olat Re'eiyah vol. 2, p. 264).

There are two ways for a person to elevate and exalt himself: through the power of alleviation or the power of insistence. One way is through relief by giving a person freedom to develop his personal character traits. The second way is through pressure which prevents

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him from expressing his essence prematurely. Through this, he stores up great strength which will burst forth when the time is ripe. This is similar to the winter which closes off the ability to sprout and grow, and then the vegetation bursts forth on its own when the spring arrives. The Exile in Egypt closed the inner strength of the Nation and as a result freedom appears when the time arrived according to the Master of the World (Olat Re'eyah vol. 2, pp. 262-264).

The Maharal asked: What freedom is there in poor people's bread? He answers that while a wealthy person has riches, he is enslaved to his possessions. A poor person, however, is truly free. He is not enslaved to anything. Do not be impressed by this world, by the nations of the world, and by all sorts of external things. A truly humble person, even when he becomes exceedingly wealthy, does not forget that he is a servant of Hashem.

India and Egypt

Rav Yehosef Ha-Eizovi said in the name of Ha-Rav Avraham ben Ezra z"l that when he was held captive in India, they always fed him matzah and not chametz (leaven). The reason is that matzah is not digested quickly like chametz and one can be satisfied with a small amount. The Egyptians acted the same way with Israel (Orchot Chaim – Kol Bo on the Haggadah).

Anyone Who is Hungry

Rav Kook explained, "The difference between Israel and the other nations is the light of kindness, which is the first light of Avraham Avinu, may peace be upon him...The world of idolatry and heresy only knows about itself, their crude, materialistic pleasure." (Olat Re'eyah vol. 2, p. 264). Kindness is one of Israel's character traits, and it is a fundamental and essential character trait. "There are three signs in this Nation: They are merciful, they have a sense of shame,

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and they perform acts of loving-kindness" (Yevamot 79a). This is also well-known among the non-Jews. They know that Israel is merciful. It once happened during the time of World War One in Switzerland that there was a knock on the door of a Jewish doctor in the middle of the night: "Doctor! Doctor!" He got dressed and came out. He saw an elderly, non-Jewish woman who informed him that her husband was extremely ill. The doctor accompanied the woman a great distance until they reached the suburbs. The doctor asked her: "There are many doctors in your area, why did you come to me?" She answered: "You are a Jew, and you have a good heart. I therefore came to you. My husband needs urgent medical care, and I know that in the middle of the night another doctor would not hurry as much as you" (Rabbenu, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah, *ibid.*, p. 19).

The desire to do good for others, which is implanted within the Nation of Israel, does not come from a calculation to profit, such as "protect me and I'll protect you" or "mine is yours, but yours is mine" (Pirkei Avot 5:10), but our nature has in it an inner desire to do good for everyone, to remove any distress and fill any lack. Kindness is therefore given to the poor not in order to boost one's pride, but so that everyone is invited to eat together with joy and respect, "anyone who is hungry, come and eat," together with us (Olat Re'eiyah vol. 2, pp. 264-265).

Question: How it is possible, however, to say, "All who are needy, come and eat the Pesach sacrifice," when the Pesach sacrifice can only be eaten in a prearranged group, before the Pesach sacrifice is offered?

Answer: As mentioned earlier, the paragraph of "Ha Lachma" was established in the Exile, when there was no longer a Pesach sacrifice. The Pesach sacrifice is mentioned out of a yearning for the time before the destruction of the Temple. During that time, they would

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certainly invite the poor beforehand in a respectful manner and not as a destitute person who is knocking on the door.

The statement of "Anyone who is hungry, come and eat" means "On this night we are all equal, and even though you are poor, do not be embarrassed, because our ancestors were also [poor] in Egypt" (Rabbi Yitzchak Abarbanel). Rabbi Natronai Ha-Gaon wrote that the custom in Babylon was not to close their doors on Seder night, but to invite their poor neighbors to come into their house to eat together. This is also the reason that this statement is in Aramaic so that everyone will understand (Me'ah She'arim). We now distribute money to the poor before Pesach, which is called "Kimcha De-Pischa – Flour for Pesach" (Yerushalmi, Baba Batra 1:4). Some explain that this is the reason for "yachatx – breaking the middle matzah," to break the bread into two pieces to give half to the poor.

Question: Why on Seder night in particular do we fulfill the mitzvah of inviting guests and not on other holidays?

Answer: One should certainly welcome guests on every holiday, on every Shabbat, and on every day, but since we suffered in Egypt, we understand what it means to suffer. Our freedom is therefore filled with kindness.

This Year We are Here

Question: Why do we say "This year we are here" even when we are in the Land of Israel?

Answer: This statement does not apply to the individual, but to Klal Yisrael (The Entirety of Israel). We do not forget that Klal Yisrael, the majority of the Nation of Israel, still remains, to our distress, outside of the Land of Israel.

Question: Will we no longer recite this statement when all of Israel returns to the Land?

Answer: Our Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah, explains that these lines

מוזגין כוס שני וכאן הבן שואל את אביו:

מַה נִשְׁתַּנָּה הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה מִכָּל הַלַּיְלוֹת?

————— Commentary —————

were obviously from the time of Exile, and they will be changed. "Ma Nishtana – Why is this night different" will not change. One must understand the difference between a law and a custom (Rabbenu, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah, *ibid.*, p. 21).

Next Year in the Land of Israel

Question: Are we really sure that we will be in Israel next year?

Answer: We are not establishing what will be in the future, but developing and preparing ourselves spiritually. Something which seems foreign to us requires an extended period of time to be nurtured within us. We are truly connected by our very essence to the Land of Israel, while existence outside of the Land is foreign to us, to the point that anyone who lives outside of the Land is similar to someone who does not have a G-d (Ketubot 110b). We were exiled from our Land because of our sins (Musaf Shemoneh Esrei for holidays). When these obstacles disappear, we will immediately return to the Land (Olat Re'eyah vol. 2, p. 265).

Next Year We Will be Free People

This is the same idea. Our essential worth is not slavery, but freedom – national and spiritual freedom. We wait expectantly for it even though it seems distant in reality. On the night when the holiday is sanctified, we speak about inner matters.

The Land of Israel is mentioned first, followed by freedom, since this is the order of the Redemption: The ingathering of the Exiles appears first and then the establishment of the State.

The Four Questions

We remove or cover the Seder plate and the son asks:

Why is this night different from all other nights?

————— Commentary —————

Questions

A famous scientist once explained how he reached his great level. When he returned home from school, instead of a mother who would usually ask: What did you learn today? His mother would ask him: What did you ask today?

The Four Questions

Question: At first glance these questions are not in the correct order. We ask: Why do we not eat matzah, why do we eat maror, why do we dip, and, finally, why do we recline? This is not the order in which we perform these acts. We first sit and recline, then we dip and eat karpas, then we eat matzah followed by the maror. Why isn't this the order of the Four Question?

Answer: Rav Kook, explained that all of these questions are designed to awaken the interest of the child who does not know how to ask. There is no reason to prepare questions for the other children. They already know how to ask on their own. You must initiate the child who does not know how to ask, and prepare questions for him. The goal, however, is for him to ask on his own. You therefore awaken him from the simple to the complex. You create a small opening for him with the general question of "Why is this night different," in the hope that he will be awakened. If he is not, we draw his attention to a detail which is not so glaring, since we also eat matzah-like bread during the year. If this does not help, we mention something more surprising: We eat dry bitter herbs

שֶׁבֶּכַל הַלֵּילֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין חֶמֶץ וּמֵצָה. הַלֵּילָה
הַזֶּה כָּלוּ מֵצָה:

שֶׁבֶּכַל הַלֵּילֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין שְׂאֵר יְרֻקֹת הַלֵּילָה
הַזֶּה מְרוֹר:

שֶׁבֶּכַל הַלֵּילֹת אֵין אָנוּ מְטַבֵּילִין אֶפְיִלוּ פְּעַם
אַחַת. הַלֵּילָה הַזֶּה שְׂתֵי פְּעָמִים:

שֶׁבֶּכַל הַלֵּילֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין בֵּין יוֹשְׁבֵין וּבֵין
מְסֻבִּין. הַלֵּילָה הַזֶּה כָּלָנוּ מְסֻבִּין:

————— Commentary —————

alone as opposed to the rest of the year when we eat them together with other vegetables as part of a meal. If this still does not help, you mention a bigger change, that we do not dip, meaning that we do not eat before the blessing of "ha-motzi" over the bread, and today we dip karpas in salt water and eat it before "ha-motzi." This is really strange. And if all of this is not successful, we point out the most bizarre act: We sit in a reclining position. If none of this helps, we begin to tell him everything that is in the Haggadah: "We were slaves" (Olat Re'iyah vol. 2, pp. 266-267).

Why ("ma") is this night different from all other nights? – Part 1

The word "ma" has the same gematria – numerical value – as the word "adam" ("man") – forty-five. A spirit of inquiry is something basic to all mankind. We are all searching in order to arrive at something essential: Faith in Hashem. The Written Torah and the Oral Torah are filled with all of the questions in the world, but in

On all other nights we eat leavened and unleavened bread, but on this night we eat only unleavened bread.

On all other nights we eat any kind of vegetables, but on this night we eat a bitter vegetable.

On all other nights we do not dip our food even once, but on this night we dip our food twice.

On all other nights we eat either sitting or reclining, but on this night we all recline.

The Seder plate is returned or uncovered. From this point onward, the matzot are left uncovered.

————— Commentary —————

order to understand what these questions are about, you need to ask. The purpose of learning is to clarify the question. It once happened that a rabbi turned to his community and said, "Perhaps someone has a question, because I have answers, but I do not know the questions."

On Seder night we perform special acts in order to encourage children to ask, since the opportunity to teach arises when someone is curious. "They pour the second cup and the child asks his father. If the son does not know [how to ask] by himself, his father teaches him 'Why is this night different from all other nights'" (Mishnah Pesachim 116a). This implies that it is best if he asks on his own in his own way.

There is even a difference of opinion among non-Jews about the value of the "old education," which emphasizes the quantity and quality of learning, vs. "the new education," which emphasizes the partnership of the student in the process of learning and acquiring

עֲבָדִים הָיִינוּ לַפְּרָעָה בְּמִצְרַיִם. וַיּוֹצֵאֲנוּ יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִשָּׁם, בְּיַד חֲזָקָה וּבְזֵרוּעַ

————— Commentary —————

the tools to learn independently. There are some educators and parents who are afraid of a child who asks questions and who raises difficulties. There is no problem, however, when people of faith have questions. The problem is when children go into the world later on with their questions still unresolved. Then it may be too late to answer them.

Why is this night different from all other nights? – Part 2

"Why is this night different from all other nights? This is how it is different. *During all other nights* refers to our long exile when we were in foreign lands, as opposed to *on this night* when now once again we find ourselves in our Land. On all *other nights* we had to serve foreign nations, while now on *this night* we are again free. On all *other nights* we built foreign cities like Pitom and Raamses, while on *this night* we are building in Tel Aviv and Ein Charod. On all *other nights* we spoke Russian and German, while on *this night* we are speaking Hebrew. On all *other nights* we wore the uniform of foreign armies, while on *this night* we adorn ourselves with the uniform of our army – Tzahal – the Israel Defense Force. Blessed is Hashem, through Whose kindness towards us, much has changed.

We dip twice

The purpose of this act is to arouse the curiosity of the children in order for them to ask questions. The Romans had the custom to dip vegetables in salt water before the meal in order to whet their appetite. We abstain from doing this, since eating is not a religious worship, but an essential need. On this night, however, we act this way to get the children to notice.

We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, and Hashem, our G-d, took us out from there with a strong hand and

————— Commentary —————

Questions

1. What is the difference between eating matzah on Seder night and eating matzah during the rest of Pesach?
2. Who created the sixteen signs of the Seder – kadesh, urchatz, karpas...?
3. Why do we use a "zero'a" (literally "arm," but here the leg of an animal, i.e. shank bone) on the Seder plate as a remembrance of the Pesach sacrifice?
4. Why do we use an egg (beitzah) for a remembrance of the holiday sacrifice (Korban Chagigah)?
5. Why is it forbidden to eat the roasted shank bone at the Seder?
6. Is it permissible to eat the egg?
7. Where does the word "bread" appear in the Haggadah?
8. What is the meaning of the word "Pesach"?
9. Who is more evil than Pharaoh?
10. Where is the Land of Israel mentioned in the Haggadah?

Answers: 1. It is an obligation on Seder night, while on the other days of Pesach it is only forbidden to eat chametz (leaven). 2. Some say Rashi, and others say Tosafot. 3. The shank bone (zero'a) is a remembrance of the "outstretched arm" (zero'a netuyah) which took us out of Egypt. 4. The word for egg in Aramaic is "bei'a" which also means "desires," Hashem desires to redeem us. 5. It is forbidden to eat roasted meat on Seder night because it looks like one is eating sacrifices outside of the Temple. 6. Yes, this is the custom. 7. In "This is the bread of affliction" and in the blessing after eating. 8. Hashem "passed over" the Jews' houses. 9. Lavan. 10. This is the bread of affliction – "Next year in the Land of Israel."

We were slaves – Part 1

This begins the main part of the mitzvah of "Magid" – relating the story of the Exodus. Everything which came before was an

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introduction, as in "and the more he relates the story of the Exodus, the more he is praiseworthy." We are fortunate that we merited leaving the state of slavery, and therefore every morning we recite the blessing: "Blessed is the One who has not made me a slave." Slavery lessens the human image. A slave is less of a person. How great is the kindness of Hashem "who has not made me a slave" (Rabbenu, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah, *ibid.*, p. 23).

Our revered teacher, Rav Kook, taught that there are different levels of slavery:

- a. There is a person who is a slave to his king. Even though it is not pleasant, at least he has a relationship and connection to the king.
- b. Worse than this is being a slave to a foreign king who conquers our Land. Although it is extremely difficult, we can take comfort that we are still in our Land.
- c. And worse of all is being a slave in a foreign land. It is not our king and not our Land.

And this was our state in Egypt:

- a. "We were slaves."
- b. "To Pharaoh," a foreign king, evil and cruel.
- c. "In Egypt," in a foreign land, impure and corrupt.

And the Master of the Universe transformed everything into goodness:

- a. "And he brought us out," from the realm of slaves to the realm of His sons.
- b. "Hashem, our G-d." The opposite of a foreign king, "They are my servants and not the servants of servants" (Baba Metziah 10a).
- c. "From there," from a foreign and despised land (Olat Re'eiya vol. 2, pp. 267-268).

The phrase "we were slaves" is based on the instruction of the Mishnah: "Begin with shame and end with praise" (Pesachim 116a),

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as our shame was a necessary preparation for us to reach the praise. Although slavery is negative, and slavery in Egypt created many corrupt character traits and caused horrible suffering, we also learned the trait of humility and we became accustomed to servitude. We are now able to use these traits to become true servants of Hashem, to nullify our will, in order to accept the yoke of the Heavenly Kingdom, and, in doing so, to understand that servitude to Hashem is the only true freedom (Olat Re'eiyah vol. 2, pp. 260-261). Our shame did not precede our praise fortuitously; this was part of the divine direction of the world. Just as night precedes the day, wholeness did not immediately appear in this world because man was still not fit for this supreme level. The world did not deserve to receive such luminosity until Avraham Avinu appeared after two thousand years of chaos. There are two ways to explain why shame precedes praise. The first is for the purpose of recognition: Evil emphasizes good. A person can best understand something through its opposite. The second, which is deeper and more essential: Out of the midst of evil comes great good, evil is transformed into good, the evil angel answers, "Amen" (Shabbat 119a) (Maharal, Gevurot Hashem pp. 223-224). Rav Kook called the Exodus and the birth of the Nation of Israel "The springtime of the entire world" (Me'ged Yerachim – Nisan – sayings for each month). Winter comes before spring, and it seems like death. In truth, however, it is a preparation for growth, a gathering of strength for the bursting forth of spring.

We were slaves - Part 2

It says in the Mishnah: "Begin with shame and end with praise" (Pesachim 10:4). Out of the midst of darkness, one can understand light. What is the shame? That was the subject of a dispute between Rav and Shmuel. Rav said: "Our ancestors were idol worshippers." Shmuel said: "We were slaves" (Pesachim 116a). Rav was speaking about spiritual freedom, and Shmuel was speaking about physical

**נְטוּיָהּ, וְאֵלֹהֵינוּ לֹא הוֹצִיא הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא אֶת־
אֲבוֹתֵינוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם, הֵרִי אֲנֹנוּ וּבְנֵינוּ וּבְנֵי בְנֵינוּ,**

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freedom. Both are the words of the Living G-d. There is no contradiction, and it is possible to mention both of them. The question nonetheless remains: Which do we mention first?

The Gemara relates that Rav Nachman once asked Daru, his servant: "What should a slave say if he is released by his master and given silver and gold?" Daru responded, "He should thank and praise him" (Pesachim ibid.).

Why did Rav Nachman need to ask his servant this question? He wanted to know how a servant feels. The latter answers: To thank and to praise. There is a difference between thanksgiving and praise. Thanksgiving is simple and fundamental recognition of the good that one has received. Praise is more exalted. It relates to the greatness of Hashem in His world, and it is a move toward greater spirituality. Thanksgiving therefore precedes praise. This is indeed the order of the Pesach Haggadah: We first recall "we were slaves" and then "our ancestors were idol worshippers." It is extremely difficult to be a servant of Hashem when a person is a servant to another person. Physical redemption precedes Spiritual redemption, just as Pesach precedes Shavuot. One first provides a healthy body and soul to a child and later he will grow in Torah. The Temple itself, "we build while unsanctified and afterwards sanctify it" (Me'ilah 14a), since "the Torah was not given to angels" (ibid. 14b). The profane is the basis for the holy. "The revival of the Nation is the foundation of the building of the great repentance" (Orot Ha-Teshuvah 17:1).

We were slaves - Part 3

Our Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah, would say that we are a Nation of freed slaves. "We were slaves" thousands of years ago, and we

with an outstretched arm. If The Holy One, Blessed Be He, had not taken our fathers out of Egypt, then we, our

————— Commentary —————

were freed. We recite: "Blessed are You, Hashem who did not make me a slave" (morning blessings), because man's true worth was revealed when this liberation occurred. A person – either as an individual or as part of a community – reveals his true essence only when he functions freely using the power of his will. A slave lacks a sense of his true identity, the integration of his essence and his true worth. When different forces reign over him, whether human or otherwise – like the evil inclination – he is prevented from revealing his true self.

"We were slaves" refers to a situation where one is unessential, and, to that degree, lacks humanity. From there we could advance to a situation in which we were normal and healthy. Hashem brought us out of slavery and degradation so that we could see the complete image of G-d, and our future as a nation. (Sichot Rabbenu - Shemot, pp. 36-37).

With a strong hand and an outstretched arm

Question: Why did Hashem bring us out with a strong hand and an outstretched arm? In other words, why did Hashem bring us out with revealed miracles? Wouldn't it have been better to take us out in a natural manner by convincing Pharaoh and with his agreement?

Answer: Rav Kook explained that if the Exodus occurred in a natural way it would not have been a great sanctification of Hashem's Name, since Pharaoh could have dignified himself by saying that it was all in his merit and with his permission. Moshe Rabbenu therefore did not entreat him, but took the Nation of Israel out with strength and courage (Olat Re'eiyah vol. 2, p. 267).

מְשַׁעְבָּדִים הָיִינוּ לַפְּרֹעָה בְּמִצְרַיִם. וְאִפְּלוּ כָלָנוּ

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Questions

1. What did Moshe Rabbenu do before he left Midian to redeem Israel from Egypt?
2. Why did Aharon perform the plagues of blood and frogs instead of Moshe Rabbenu?
3. Why did Aharon perform the plague of lice instead of Moshe Rabbenu?
4. The Torah says that we were in Egypt 430 years (Shemot 12:40). From when did this count begin?
5. What did Moshe Rabbenu take with him when he left Egypt?
6. Where is the number three mentioned in the Haggadah aside from "Who knows three"?
7. Where is the number four mentioned in the Haggadah?
8. Where is the number five found in the Haggadah?
9. Where is the number fifty mentioned?
10. Where is the number seventy mentioned?

Answers: 1. He asked permission from his father-in-law, Yitro. 2. It was Moshe Rabbenu's gratitude to the river for protecting him when he was in the basket (Rashi to Shemot 7:19). 3. Aharon hit the sand because the sand protected Moshe Rabbenu when he hid the Egyptian which he killed (Rashi to Shemot 8:12). 4. From the Covenant between the Pieces (Bereshit, chapter 15). 5. The bones of Yosef (Shemot 13:19). 6. Rabban Gamliel says that anyone who does not mention these three things... 7. Four sons. 8. The five sages in Bnei Brak. 9. Increasing the plagues. 10. Rabbi Elazar ben Azariyah was like a seventy year old man and seventy people went down to Egypt.

And if He had not brought out – Part 1

Question: "If The Holy One, Blessed Be He, had not brought our ancestors out of Egypt, we, our children and our grandchildren would still be enslaved to Pharaoh in Egypt." How are we able to understand this statement? This Pharaoh died a long time ago and

children and our children's children would have remained enslaved to Pharaoh in Egypt. And even if all of us are

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his offspring have disappeared. There would certainly have been changes and insurrections during the last thousands of years.

Answer: This statement means that if it were not for the Exodus, the entire world would have remained unchanged as if the same Pharaoh was still reigning. The world would not have advanced if not through the auspices of the Nation of Israel and the Torah. If it were not for the appearance of this brilliant, illuminating event, the renewal of this great light, the entire world would have had nothing to influence it, and it would have been, in a sense, frozen in place (Olat Re'eiyah vol. 2, p. 268 and Rabbenu Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah, *ibid.*, p. 27). Therefore, "The Exodus from Egypt will eternally remain the springtime of the entire world" (Meged Yerachim – Nisan – Rav Kook's sayings for each month). "It is not only the springtime of the Nation of Israel, but the springtime of humanity. The Exodus from Egypt was an occurrence like this; only with partial vision is it considered as an event which occurred once in the past, remaining as a memory...But truly...the essential act of the Exodus from Egypt is an action which has never ended. It revealed the Hand of Hashem in a way that the whole world could clearly see, as part of human history. It is the bursting forth of the light from the soul of the Living G-d and it operates in the expanses of the world. Israel merited this revelation, in which magnificence and incipient holiness will cause great lights to shine in every dark place for all generations" (Olat Re'eiyah vol. 1, p. 26).

Question: How is it possible even to discuss the eventuality of "And if He had not brought out our ancestor?" Didn't Hashem promise Avraham Avinu at the Covenant between the Pieces, "...your offspring will be strangers in a land which is not their own...and afterwards they will leave with great wealth...and the fourth generation will return here" (Bereshit 15:13-16)?

חֲכָמִים, פָּלְנוּ נְבוֹנִים, פָּלְנוּ זְקֵנִים, פָּלְנוּ יוֹדְעִים

————— Commentary —————

Answer: The Exodus was certainly dependent on the promise to Avraham Avinu, and we left Egypt to gain freedom, but if we return to being slaves, we still remain as completely free in our essence, "physically slaves, spiritually free" (Maharal, Pesach Haggadah). "According to the word that I made as a covenant with you when you came out of Egypt, so My spirit remains among you. Do not fear" (Chagai 2:5). The same spirit of Hashem, the eternal spirit of freedom, which was implanted within us, will never be removed from us (Ha-Rav Menachem Mendel Kasher).

And if He had not brought out - Part 2

Question: "If The Holy One, Blessed Be He, had not brought our ancestors out of Egypt, we, our children, and our grandchildren would still be enslaved to Pharaoh in Egypt." How is it possible that we would still be slaves to Pharaoh until this day, when the Egyptian Empire was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar a long time ago?

Answer: We are not simply discussing a political dominion, but a spiritual one as well. The entire foundation of the Exodus is the coming into existence of faith in Hashem, in contrast to Pharaoh who claimed: "I do not know Hashem" (Shemot 5:2). This meant that he had no desire to follow in His ways and to perform His will. Pharaoh wanted to continue in malice and wickedness, as per the uncircumcised heart of man.

If it were not for a pure faith in the Divine which the Nation of Israel brought into being, none of humanity would have been able to overcome enslavement to the physical world (see Olat Re'eiya vol. 2, p. 268). Egypt exemplified the culture of materialism brought to its highest point: Nature and the material world were not a passage to something beyond; objects like stars and constellations were perceived as divine, and there was no One G-d above them.

wise, all of us understanding, all of us sages, all of us

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Hashem's light which broke through in Israel brought a new fundamental principle, a new factor, into the world: elevating and purifying by limiting the material. Thus began the springtime of the entire world (Meged Yerachim – Nisan). The Exodus was not an historical occurrence which happened once and ended. It eternally changed the face of humanity and all of history. There was a new factor: a miracle, a nullification of nature. In the darkness of the Exile in which we were enslaved to the nations, we could therefore continue to rejoice on Pesach, even though we were saying, "Now, we are slaves; next year, we will be free people." This can be compared to a destitute and uneducated man, who suddenly rose to prominence and became wealthy. He hired private tutors, and with their help he became knowledgeable. After some time he lost his wealth and returned to a life of poverty. Nonetheless, he continued to celebrate the anniversary of when he became wealthy. People asked him: "Why do you rejoice when you have returned to a life of poverty?" He answered them: "I lost the money, but the wisdom will remain with me forever." In the bitter Exile, we lost our freedom and were enslaved under a foreign yoke, but we merited to be a treasured nation for eternity and to receive our Holy Torah. We therefore rejoice on this day. In the end, "next year, we will be free" will be fulfilled through us. We are fortunate that we merited this to occur in our time.

Even if all of us are wise

Question: It says in the Haggadah, "...It is incumbent upon us to relate the story of the Exodus from Egypt," but isn't it an obligation to mention the Exodus every day, which we do by reciting the third paragraph of the Shema?

Answer: On Seder night it is a mitzvah to discuss it more and in

**אֶת־הַתּוֹרָה, מִצּוֹה עָלֵינוּ לְסַפֵּר בִּיצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם. וְכָל
הַמְרַבֵּה לְסַפֵּר בִּיצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם, הֵרִי זֶה מְשַׁבַּח:**

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greater depth: "And the more one relates the story of the Exodus, the more praiseworthy he is" (Maharam Shick on the 613 Mitzvot, mitzvah #21). You might say that since the goal of relating the Exodus is to understand the great kindness that the Master of the Universe performed for us, why is there a need for a wise person to do this; he already appreciates this with all his heart? And the understanding person, why does he need such a lengthy explanation? He only needs a short comment, and he can figure the rest out on his own. But the Haggadah teaches us that just briefly mentioning the matter is not enough; there is a mitzvah to relate the full story of the Exodus. Furthermore, the more one expands the telling, the more praiseworthy one is. This means that the enhancement in telling the story of the Exodus is the mitzvah, and relating it at greater depth is the best way to fulfill the mitzvah (Olat Re'eiyah vol. 2, p. 268). This statement is therefore followed by the story of how the Sages discussed the story the entire night, until their students came in and told them that it was time to recite the morning Shema. This is how much one should relate the story on that night. Even though these were the greatest of Rabbis, the first row of "Tana'im" (Rabbis from the time of the Mishnah), they did not think that this matter was sufficiently known and completely clear to them, so they engaged in studying it the entire night (Rabbenu, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah, *ibid.*, pp. 29-30).

It is incumbent upon us to relate

Question: If Pesach is the time of freedom, why talk about it? Freedom is not a time to talk, but a time for action! We should grab a weapon and liberate the Nation!

knowing the Torah, we must still relate the story of the Exodus from Egypt. And the more one relates the story of the Exodus, the more praiseworthy he is.

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Answer: The basis for action is first discussion and then afterwards comprehension. Freedom is connected to this process. Physical freedom is a continuation of spiritual freedom. It is therefore a mitzvah to discuss, obviously not small talk, but what we understand and what we know. Our cognition brings about action, and poor understanding causes ineffective action. The Arizal therefore said that the word "Pesach" hints to the two Hebrew words "Peh Sach – the speaking mouth." Even Moshe Rabbenu – when the Master of the Universe called to him, he responded: I am not suitable, "I am not a man of words" (Shemot 4:10). It later became clear that Moshe Rabbenu was the ultimate man of words: "These are the words which Moshe said" (Devarim 1:1).

And the more one relates the story of the Exodus, the more praiseworthy he is – Part 1

The great Rabbi, Rabbi Yehoshua from Kovno, the author of the responsa "Yeshu'ot Malko," explained that through relating the story the teller becomes praiseworthy, as it says: "And so that you will relate into the ears of your son and your grandson...so that you will know that I am Hashem" (Shemot 10:2). Through the story we arrive at faith in Hashem. In truth, the way to bring children to faith in Hashem is through the stories in the Torah and in the words of our Sages about the Nation of Israel.

A major dispute erupted between two of the greatest Rabbis in Lithuania, Rabbi Aryeh Leib, the author of "Sha'agat Aryeh," and Rabbi Yechi'el Halpern, the author of "Seder Ha-Dorot," over incidents which occurred in the city of Minsk. The "Sha'agat Aryeh," who would virtually invalidate the arguments of all of the great

מַעֲשֵׂה בְּרַבֵּי אֶלְיָעָזֵר, וְרַבֵּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ, וְרַבֵּי אֶלְעָזָר
 בְּרֵעֵזְרִיָּה, וְרַבֵּי עֲקִיבָא, וְרַבֵּי טַרְפוֹן, שֶׁהָיוּ
 מְסַבִּין בְּבִנְי־בְרֵקָה, וְהָיוּ מְסַפְּרִים בִּיצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם, כָּל־
 אוֹתוֹ הַלַּיְלָה, עַד שֶׁבָּאוּ תַלְמִידֵיהֶם וְאָמְרוּ לָהֶם:
 רַבּוֹתֵינוּ, הִגִּיעַ זְמַן קְרִיאַת שְׁמַע, שֶׁל שַׁחֲרִית:

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Rabbis of that generation with his own, referred to the other as: "One who writes stories about what occurred." The two of them once met at a festive meal after a brit milah. The "Sha'agat Aryeh" turned to the "Seder Ha-Dorot" and said to him: You are arguing with me? If, G-d forbid, the Torah was forgotten in Israel, I could recreate it with dialectics. The "Seder Dorot" responded: You are arguing with me? In my stories about what happened during the generations of the Tana'im (Rabbis of the Mishnah), the Amora'im (Rabbis of the Gemara), and about the great Rabbis of Israel and its Sages throughout the generations, I ensure that the Torah will not be forgot by Israel (Ha-Rav Yehudah Leib Maimon, at the beginning of the book "Sarei Me'ah").

And the more he relates the story of the Exodus - Part 2

"One who recites Hallel every day blasphemes" (Shabbat 118b). The reason is because we mention unnatural miracles in Hallel, like the Exodus and the Splitting of the Red Sea, and if we recite it every day, it is as if we are praising Hashem for His miraculous actions beyond nature, and not His actions within nature. This is blasphemous. Nonetheless, "Anyone who says 'Tehilah Le-David' ('Ashrei') three times a day is guaranteed to have a share in the World to Come" (Berachot 4b), because "Ashrei" speaks about Divine actions within nature, "Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures throughout all generations" (Tehillim 145:13), "And You give them their food in the proper time" (ibid.

It happened that Rabbi Eliezer, Rabbi Yehoshua, Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah, Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Tarfon were reclining in Bnei Brak. They were discussing the Exodus from Egypt all that night, until their students came and told them: "Our Rabbis, the time has arrived for reciting the morning Shema!"

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15). Anyone who says this every day displays his faith in constant Divine Providence. On Pesach and on other special days on which miracles occurred are proper times to praise Hashem for His actions which are beyond nature (Meshech Chochmah).

The Exodus From Egypt

There are those who explain that even when we find ourselves in a dark situation, we should not despair. Instead we must strengthen our service to Hashem and remember that we suffered horribly in Egypt and had sunk to the forty-ninth level of impurity, yet we were physically and spiritually redeemed.

It once happened with Rabbi Eliezer – Part 1

Question: Since the "Magid" – telling the story of the Exodus – is before eating the matzah, how is it possible that our Sages did not eat matzah or anything else?

Answer: The "Sefat Emet" answered that because of their great desire for Torah, in their constant love of attaining its knowledge, they forgot to eat matzah. This is difficult to accept. Perhaps we can suggest that the "Magid" in which they engaged was after eating the matzah and the meal.

It once happened with Rabbi Eliezer - Part 2

Question: Rabbi Yehudah Leib Maimon (leader of the Mizrachi Movement in the early years of the establishment of the State of

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Israel) makes an interesting comment with contemporary “Zionist” implications on this passage of the Haggadah. Bnei Brak was Rabbi Akiva's hometown (Sanhedrin 32b). All of the other sages lived elsewhere. Rabbi Yehoshua, for example, lived in Peki'in, and Rabbi Eliezer in Lod (ibid.). This entire story is therefore surprising. Why did these great Rabbis come to Bnei Brak instead of holding a seder at home with their families? They were not single; they had families.

Answer: Rabbi Maimon suggests that the meeting between these five giants had an historical, political, and military value to it. They came to Rabbi Akiva who was holy and pure, as well as a military expert. He was "Bar Kochva's right hand man" (Rambam, Hilchot Melachim 11:3; similarly, see the commentary "Kesef Mishnah" of Rabbi Yosef Karo on the Rambam.) This means that Rabbi Akiva was the spiritual force behind Bar Kochva's revolt against the Romans. The great Rabbis therefore took the exceptional step of coming to him for the seder in order to hold a military summit (Rabbenu, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah, ibid., p. 34). Rabbi Akiva declared Bar Kochva to be the Messiah and applied the following verse to him, "A star ("cochav" which is similar to his name "Kochva") shall shoot out from Ya'akov" (Bamidbar 24:17, Yerushalmi Ta'anit 4:5 and Eichah Rabbah 2:4).

Some say that Rabbi Akiva erred in his support of Bar Kochva. G-d forbid! A giant like this does not err. Even in his generation, no one dared disagree with Rabbi Akiva, except for one sage, who told him, "Grass will grow out of your cheeks and [the Messiah] Son of David still will not have arrived (Yerushalmi, ibid.). There were, however, sages who had reservations about Rabbi Akiva's opinion. They felt that Bar Kochva did not fit the prophet Yeshayahu's description of the Messiah: "The spirit of G-d will rest upon him, a spirit of wisdom and understanding, a spirit of counsel and courage, a spirit of knowledge and fear of G-d, and he will find delight in the fear of G-d" (Yeshayahu 11:2-3, Sanhedrin 93b and Ra'avad, Hilchot

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Melachim 11:3). Rabbi Akiva, however, did not make allowance for this (Radvaz *ibid.*). He found Bar Kochva to be courageous and heroic. Over several years he brought great salvation to Israel, and he merited victory over the Romans. Rabbi Akiva thought that these were the decisive factors (Eichah Rabbah *ibid.*). Our Sages did not say that he was not correct in this opinion. Even the Rambam does not state that Rabbi Akiva erred in encouraging Bar Kochva, but that "he and all the Sages of his generation [erred when they] imagined that he was the Messiah" (Rambam *ibid.*). Rabbi Akiva ascribed a messianic role to Bar Kochva, and it later became clear that this was not true (Rabbenu, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah *ibid.*, p. 34). In 5694, shortly before he passed away, our revered teacher, Rav Kook, wrote a letter to the newly founded Bnei Akiva youth movement, which considered Rabbi Akiva to be their spiritual leader: "...As the Redemption blossoms, the special quality of Rabbi Akiva can serve as a worldly light for us. [That quality is] enthusiasm for and devotion to the vision of Redemption and to the revival of the Nation and its Land. While that vision originally failed, and Bar Kochva fell and, with him, Israel fell as an independent nation, we are confident that holy man's [Rabbi Akiva] clear vision of Torah will have its hour of truth. That hour is fast approaching; we shall not fail the second time. Not for nothing has the Nation of Israel been fighting for its existence and its eternity throughout all generations until now" (Ma'marei Re'eiyah, pp. 202-203). This "Dvar Torah" of our teacher came true: "Our own Bar Kochva rebellion" - The War of Independence - was, with G-d's mercy, successful.

The time to recite the Shema has arrived

Question: Our Rabbis didn't know that the time to recite the Shema had arrived? Why did they need their students to tell them?

Answer: We can explain that the students acted with a lack of respect. Although there is an obligation for a student to rebuke his

————— Commentary —————

rabbi, there is also an obligation to do so in a respectful manner: "Did you not teach us, our Rabbi?" (Berachot 2:5-7). This gathering was being held in Bnei Brak, the city of Rabbi Akiva (Sanhedrin 32b). These were the students of Rabbi Akiva who did not treat each other with respect, and who died between Pesach and Shavuot (Yevamot 62b). We also see that they did not treat their Rabbis with respect.

We can ask how Rabbi Akiva, who taught "This is the great principle in the Torah - Love your fellow as yourself" (Jerusalem Talmud, Nedarim 4), was not able to influence his students in the proper way? **Answer:** They were corrupt to the deepest recesses of their souls (See Chesed Le-Avraham of Rabbi Avraham Azulai, ma'ayan chamishi nahar #25, and also Sefer Asarah Ma'amarot of Rabbi Menachem Azaryah of Pano, ma'amar Im Kol Chai 1-3). The wonderful education of Rabbi Akiva helped partially to purify their souls, but not completely. The dross remained so that they did not respect one another, and they also acted brazenly toward their Rabbis.

Another explanation: We can also explain that these Rabbis had secluded themselves and loved the mitzvah of relating the Exodus from Egypt so much that they did not sense the morning light (Kol Bo, Rabbi David Abudraham, Rabbi Yitzchak Abarbanel).

A third explanation: Ha-Rav Yehudah Leib Maimon explained that because this gathering had a political-military value, discussing the rebellion against the Romans, the students therefore did not participate, but only the Rabbis. The students remained outside to stand guard against the Romans, while the Sages hid themselves in the basement. They therefore did not see that the morning had arrived. Based on this explanation, it is also possible to understand another story found in the Talmud. One Pesach a certain non-Jew came to the Land of Israel from Babylonia pretending to be a Jew, and he ate from the Pesach sacrifice. He returned home and boasted

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how he deceived the Jews and ate the best portions of the Pesach sacrifice. Rabbi Yehudah ben Beteira asked him: "Did they give you the fatty tail to eat?" "No," he replied. The Rabbi said: "If so, next time you have to ask for it, because this is the best part." This non-Jew obviously was unaware that we do not eat this part, but it is sacrificed it on the altar. The next year he requested the fatty tail. They were shocked and asked him where he learned to ask for this part of the sacrifice. He told them that Rabbi Yehudah ben Beteira told him. They sensed what was hidden in his words. They investigated and discovered that he was in fact a non-Jew and killed him. They sent a message to Rabbi Yehudah ben Beteira: You are in the city of Netzivim, but your trap worked in Jerusalem (Pesachim 3b).

Why did they kill him? While it is forbidden for a non-Jew to eat from the Pesach sacrifice, as it is written, "any foreigner may not eat from it" (Shemot 12:43. Mechilta ibid.), it is not one of the seven mitzvot of the non-Jews for which they are liable for capital punishment.

The commentators answer this difficulty in various ways:

1. He stole a kezayit (olive-size piece) of the Pesach sacrifice, and a non-Jew who steals that is liable for death. This is similar to a non-Jew who learns Torah and is liable for death (Rabbi Akiva Schleshinger, Mishnato shel Rabbi Akiva #14). This answer is difficult, however, since he is liable to death by Heaven and not by a Beit Din (court). He explains: "A Beit Din strikes and punishes for non-Torah transgressions (Yevamot 4b), in order to prevent all breaches, in particular for attacks in matters of the Temple (ibid.)."
2. Rav Kook, explained that they killed him as a temporary ruling because of the desecration of Hashem's Name (Tuv Ra'ayah, Pesachim).
3. Rav Zvi Hirsch Chayot (Maharatz Chayot) answered that this

אָמַר רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר בֶּן־עֲזַרְיָה. הֲרִי אֲנִי כְּבֹן שְׁבַעִים
 שָׁנָה, וְלֹא זָכִיתִי, שְׁתֹּאמֵר יְצִיאֵת מִצְרַיִם
 בְּלִילוֹת. עַד שֶׁדָּרְשָׁה בֶן זֹמָא. שְׁנֵאמַר: לְמַעַן תִּזְכֹּר, אֵת
 יוֹם צֵאתְךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם, כֹּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ. יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ הַיְמִיִּים.

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incident occurred after the destruction of the Temple. The Tosafot already ask: Why didn't Rabbi Yehudah ben Beteira himself not make the pilgrimage to sacrifice the Pesach sacrifice. They give various answers: He did not own land in Israel, he was elderly and had no strength to ascend, or he was outside of Israel (Tosafot, Pesachim 3b). According to the Maharatz Chayot, this occurred after the destruction of the Temple when there was no obligation to offer sacrifices, and only individuals continued this practice. During this time, the non-Jewish authorities trailed the Jews, because of the fear that they would revolt. The Jews were concerned that the authorities would interpret the offering of the sacrifice and its consumption in a group as an organization to revolt. They therefore did it in secret. They feared that this non-Jew would inform against them to the authorities about the offering of the Pesach sacrifice. The authorities would smell the odor of rebellion in this act and would kill them. This was a case of saving lives, and they decided to get rid of this non-Jew (kuntres "Avodat Ha-Mikdash"). My grandfather and my teacher, Rav Meir Flam, explained that perhaps the Jews combined the offering of the Pesach sacrifice and the organizing of the rebellion, and they therefore did not want the non-Jew to be in the vicinity.

I am like a seventy year old man

He wasn't really seventy years old, he was only eighteen. On the day that Rabban Gamliel was removed from his position as the Nasi (Head) of the Sanhedrin, Rabbi Elazar ben Azariyah was appointed

Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah said: "I am like a man of seventy years old, yet I did not succeed in proving that the Exodus from Egypt must be mentioned at night until Ben Zoma explained it: It is said, 'That you may remember the day you left Egypt all the days of your

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in his place; a miracle occurred to Rabbi Elazar, and his hair turned white (Berachot 28a). He nevertheless did not succeed in proving why we must mention the Exodus at night, which we do by reciting the third paragraph of the Shema. This was the case until Ben Zoma, who was a great Torah scholar, but did not receive the title of "Rav" on account of his youth, explained that "all of the days of your life" include both the days and the nights. The Rabbis, however, held that we should not recite this paragraph at night and that the verse "all of the days of your life" teaches us that we must recall the Exodus both in this world and in the days of the Messiah. Ben Zoma, however, held that in the days of the Messiah, we will not recall the Exodus, because the future Redemption will be so great that its light will hide the miracle of the Exodus, as Yirmiyahu says: "Therefore, behold, days are coming, says Hashem, when they will no longer say, 'As Hashem lives, who brought the Children of Israel out of the land of Egypt,' but 'As Hashem lives, Who raised and returned the seed of the house of Israel from out of the northern lands and from every country into which I had driven them, and they will dwell on their own Land'" (Yirmiyahu 23:7-8). The Rabbis held that these verses from Yirmiyahu do not mean that the remembrance of the Exodus will be uprooted, but the great miracle of liberation from the oppression of the kingdoms of the world will be the main remembrance, and the Exodus will be the secondary one (Bereachot 12b). The Maharal explained that the first Redemption of the Exodus laid the foundation for the future Redemption. It is true that we will reach yet a higher spiritual level,

כֹּל יְמֵי חַיֵּיךָ הַלְּיָלוֹת. וְחַכְמַיִם אֹמְרִים: יְמֵי חַיֵּיךָ הָעוֹלָם
הַזֶּה. כֹּל יְמֵי חַיֵּיךָ לְהַבְיֵא לְיָמוֹת הַמְּשִׁיחַ:

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but this level was already hidden and stored away in the Nation of Israel during the time of the Exodus, and it will become activated in the future Redemption (introduction to Netzach Yisrael).

Another explanation of Rabbi Elazar ben Azariyah's age: Rabbi Elazar ben Azariyah related that his wife said to him: "You do not have white hair," which means that it is not proper for a young man whose hair has yet to turn white to stand at the head of the Sages. On that day, when he was eighteen years old, a miracle happened to him and eighteen rows of his hair turned white (Berachot 28a). This, however, was only the beginning. Overnight all of his hair quickly turned white. This follows the Rambam who writes: "And yet that which Rabbi Elazar ben Azariyah said: 'I am like a seventy year old man,' and he did not say: 'I am a seventy year old man' is because he was not seventy years old, but much younger. He spent a great deal of time learning, studying and reading, day and night, until his strength was weakened and old age was cast upon him. He became like an elderly man of seventy years old, and it was the beginning of old age according to his will" as explained in the Gemara (commentary to the Mishnah ibid.). According to this, when Rabbi Elazar ben Azariyah said that he was like a seventy year old man, he was no longer eighteen years old, but much older.

Indicates the inclusion of the days of Messiah

"And 'all' [the days of your life] indicates the inclusion of the days of Messiah." This means that a person must dedicate all of the days of his life for this exalted purpose: To bring the days of the Messiah.

life' (Devarim 16:3). 'The days of your life' refers to the days, [and the additional word] 'all' [the days of your life] indicates the inclusion of the nights. The Sages, however, said: 'The days of your life' refers to this world, and 'all' [the days of your life] indicates that the days of Messiah are included as well."

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Questions

1. Who asks the four questions if there is no child?
2. How long were the Children of Israel in Egypt?
3. How long did the plague of darkness last?
4. What is the difference between the four questions we recite today and those recited in the time of the Temple?
5. Why do we eat the karpas before the meal and not in the middle?
6. Which plagues could the sorcerers of Egypt perform?
7. Why do we say Shir Ha-Shirim on Pesach?
8. Why do the firstborns fast on Erev Pesach?
9. Why do we place an egg on the Seder plate?
10. Which three famous Jews did not experience the splitting of the Red Sea?

Answers: 1. An adult, even if he is by himself. 2. 210 years. 3. Three days. 4. In the Temple they asked, why we eat meat which is roasted, cooked or boiled on all other nights but only roasted meat on this night. We do not ask this question today, but ask why we recline. 5. In order for the children to ask about it. 6. Blood and frogs. They tried to perform the plague of lice, but did not succeed. 7. To express the love between Hashem and the Nation of Israel. 8. Because they were saved. 9. As a remembrance of the holiday sacrifice (Korban Chagigah). 10. Tziporah and Moshe's two sons, Gershom and Eliezer.

בְּרוּךְ הַמְּקוֹם. בְּרוּךְ הוּא. בְּרוּךְ שֶׁנָּתַן תּוֹרָה לְעַמּוֹ
יִשְׂרָאֵל. בְּרוּךְ הוּא.

כְּנֵגֶד אַרְבָּעָה בָּנִים דִּבְרָה תּוֹרָה. אֶחָד חָכָם, וְאֶחָד
רָשָׁע, וְאֶחָד תָּם, וְאֶחָד שְׂאִינוֹ יוֹדֵעַ לְשֵׂאוֹל:

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Blessed is The Place

The Master of the Universe is called, "The Place," since He is the place of the world, but the world is not His sole place" (Bereshit Rabbah 68:9). Hashem does not have a specific place, as opposed to idols, which are "god-like" entities which are located in a specific spot. For idol worshippers, the world is the place of their gods. For the Master of the Universe, the world is secondary, something which He created (Nefesh Ha-Chaim 3, 1-6). "Hashem said, "There is a place by me" (Shemot 33:21), which means, "The place is secondary to me, but I am not secondary to the place" (Shemot Rabbah, end of chapter 45).

Question: Why is this description used as an introduction to the four sons?

Answer: While the Master of the Universe is The Place of the world, and not limited to any specific location, He nonetheless gave the Torah, created the world, and minimized the dwelling of the Divine Presence in accordance with our level (Olat Re'eyah vol. 2, p. 268). "On account of His activities and creation of the world, He is called "The Place" (Shiur Komah of Rabbi Moshe Cordovero, chapter 20 and Olat Re'eyah vol. 2, p. 493). Hashem created the world according to the limitations of those He created, and He revealed Himself in the Torah according to their various perspectives and levels: The wise one, the wicked one, the simple one and the one who does not know how to ask (ibid., p. 274).

Blessed is the Place, Omnipresent One, blessed be He.
 Blessed is He who gave the Torah to His
 Nation Israel, blessed be He.

The Torah speaks of four children: One is wise, one
 is wicked, one is simple and one does not know
 how to ask.

————— Commentary —————

The Four Sons – Part 1

We find four different explanations in the Torah regarding the Exodus. The reason of these four explanations is that the Torah is directed to four different children. Each child requires a different explanation, because you cannot educate everyone with one standard method. We are all on different levels and need a different approach. Our revered teacher, Rav Kook, explained that each person requires a different type of convincing and explanation to awaken recognition within him, each according to his own inner world (Orot Ha-Kodesh vol. 3, p. 88). One needs to say something in a way that it will be heard. The Torah is from Heaven, but it is not in Heaven. It applies to us and speaks in the language of man. With this in mind, we can understand the introduction to the Four Sons: "Blessed is The Place, blessed is He. Blessed is the One who gave the Torah to His Nation Israel." At first thought this seems more appropriate to Shavuot than Pesach, but this is indeed the proper introduction to the Four Sons. Based on the fact that the word of Hashem is directed to four levels in a manner suited to each child, the Haggadah emphasizes that Hashem truly gave us the Torah (Ritva and Rabbi Yitzchak Abarbanel).

The Four Sons - Part 2

It seems that a child experiences each of these stages as he develops,

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and that they are also the four types of people who sit before the Sages: A sponge, a funnel, a strainer and a sieve (Pirkei Avot 5:15). At the beginning of his life, a child does not know how to ask. He lacks the ability to absorb, like a funnel which lets everything in from one side and out from the other. At a young age, he is simple. He believes everything, like a sponge which soaks up everything. As he matures, he passes into the realm of the wicked. He passes through the difficult crises of rejection and denial, like a strainer which lets the wine out and holds onto the dregs, the wasteful parts of life. When he grows and overcomes these crises of maturity he reaches the level of the wise, like a sieve which lets the course flour out and holds on to the fine flour, the choice part. Obviously, love must surround the child at every stage. Our Sages taught that the verse, "You are children to Hashem" (Devarim 14:1), includes the entire Nation (Kiddushin 36a). Rabbi Yehudah said, "You are called children only when you act as children, but when you do not act like children, you are not called children." The Halachah, however, follows the opinion of Rabbi Meir (see Igrot Ha-Re'eyah, letter #555), who said, "Either way, they are called children." Rabbi Meir brought four verses to prove his position: A. "They are foolish children" (Yirmiyahu 4:22). From this verse, we learn that even when they are acting foolishly, they are still called children B. "Children, they are not trustworthy." (Devarim 32:20). From here we learn that even when they are acting in an untrustworthy way, they are called children. C. "Evil seed, children that act corruptly." (Yeshayahu 1:4). Furthermore, even if they are evil, they are called children. D. Instead of saying you are not my Nation, they will say, "children of the Living G-d," they are my children for eternity (Hoshe'a 2:1. Kiddushin ibid.).

The Four Sons - Part 3

The Four Sons correspond to the four cups of wine, the four tzitzit,

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the four sections in Tefillin, the four species of Sukkot, the four Sages who entered the orchard of mysticism (Chagigah 14b-15a), and – the root of everything – the four letters of Hashem's Name. The wise son corresponds to the first cup of wine – Kadesh – sanctification, supreme holiness. The wicked son corresponds to the second cup, Magid – relating the story of the Exodus, “at first our ancestors were idol worshippers,” which begins with shame. The simple son corresponds to the third cup which we use for Birkat Ha-mazon (the blessing after eating) which is said in innocence and wholeness. And the son who does not know how to ask corresponds to the fourth cup when we say "who do not know you" (in "Pour out Your wrath").

Wise son, wicked son, simple son, the son who does not know how to ask

Question: Wouldn't a more appropriate order be: Wise son, simple son, the son who does not know how to ask, and the wicked son? The wise son is the supreme level of wisdom, more than an ordinary person. Next comes the simple son, who is upright. Then there is the son who does not know how to ask. He is empty and lacks spiritual stirrings, but at least he is not wicked. The last is the wicked son who is the opposite of good. He is completely materialistic in relation to the Torah and the Nation of Israel.

Answer: The Arizal answered that the Four Sons are placed in order according to their partnership. The wise son is the only one capable of helping the wicked son without damaging himself. "The wicked requires a great light," says the Arizal. It is enough for the son who does not know how to ask to have the light of the simple son. When the exiles of Babylonia returned to Israel, many of them were at the lowest level. Ezra and Nehemiah therefore used the supreme medicine: Calling out in the Name of Hashem in Its greatness (Yoma 69b).

חכם מַה הוּא אוֹמֵר? מַה הָעֵדוּת וְהַחֲקִים וְהַמְשָׁפְטִים,
 אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֶתְכֶם? וְאֵף אֶתָּה אֶמְרֵלוּ
 כְּהִלְכוֹת הַפֶּסַח: אֵין מִפְטִירֵינוּ אַחַר הַפֶּסַח אֶפִיקוֹמוֹ:

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More about the four sons

In life, there is a war of minds between the wise and the wicked. The simple son and the one who cannot ask stand in the middle, in the realm of the silent majority who are in doubt and are pulled in different directions. The wicked are a negligible minority unless they are successful in deceiving the simple and the one who does not know how to ask. Therefore, in order to ensure that communal issues are decided properly, our Sages must work to positively influence the simple Jews and the Jews who do not know how to ask.

The wise son – what does he say? – Part 1

A famous question: Why is the wicked son rebuked when he says, "What is this service to you" and not "to us," when the wise son seems to say the same thing, "Which Hashem, our G-d, commanded you?"

Answer: There is a great difference between the questions. The wise son reveals his interest in all of the halachot of the Oral Torah by specifying the testimonies, the laws, and the statutes (see Olat Re'eiyah vol. 2, pp. 275-276). He also says, "Hashem, our G-d" (Rabbenu, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah, ibid., p. 61), and accepts the yoke of the Heavenly Kingdom upon himself.

Question: Why does the Haggadah say that we should instruct the wise son about "the laws of the Pesach sacrifice," i.e. halachot, and not other spiritual teachings?

The wise one, what does he say? What are the testimonies, the statutes and the laws which Hashem, our G-d, has commanded you? You should respond by telling him the laws of the Pesach Sacrifice: "One is not to eat any dessert after the Pesach lamb."

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Answer: This Torah learning reveals a need for action. The Gemara teaches, "Anyone who says, 'I only have Torah'...he does not even have Torah" (Yevamot 109b), since such a statement demonstrates that his relationship to Torah is incorrect. Learning is in order to perform: "Great is learning which brings action" (Kiddushin 40b). The meaning of the title "Sage in the entire Torah" is not simply a learned man, but a wise-righteous individual whose wisdom finds expression in action (see Olat Re'eiyah vol. 2, p. 275).

Question: Why do we specifically teach him, "We do not eat dessert after the Pesach sacrifice."

Answer: This is practically the last Mishnah in Massechet Pesachim. This means that we teach him everything from beginning to end. Another explanation: This is a rabbinic ruling which is seemingly not based on a verse in the Torah. "Give it to the wise and let him become wiser." He can endeavor to figure out its source and its reason (Rabbi Yitzchak Abarbanel). And still another explanation: The meaning of this halachah is that one should not eat anything after the Pesach sacrifice so that the taste of the Pesach sacrifice will remain in his mouth. Based on this idea, we do not eat anything after the last matzah of the Seder so that the taste of the matzah will remain in our mouths. This seems to be a minute detail. Why then do they teach this to the wise son? This halachic detail is as important as "the laws of Pesach," i.e. sacrificing the Pesach sacrifice, because it establishes the reason or the "taste" of the mitzvah (The

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word "ta'am" can mean both reason and taste) (Olat Re'eiyah vol. 2, pp. 275-276). It is not enough to fulfill the mitzvot; we must also experience their "taste," and fulfill them with love, out of the love of Hashem.

The wise son – what does he say? - Part 2

Sages are not the majority. There is one son who is wise and three others who are not. Wisdom, however, is not fixed by the majority, but by the truth. The wise son is not someone who thinks he knows everything, but just the opposite; he is someone who asks broad questions. The wicked son does not ask questions but states facts, as it says in the Torah, "And when your sons say to you: What is this work to you" (Shemot 12:26). Based on this, our Rabbis maintain that the verse is referring to the wicked son because it uses the word say and not ask. They learn that the Torah is referring here to the wicked son, who is not asking to understand the truth and the content of the issues, but comes to contradict and deny everything" (Chukat Ha-Pesach, brought in Haggadah Sheleimah of Rav Menachem Mendel Kasher). "This is not the way of someone who is questioning and investigating fundamental principles, but of one who states things definitively as criticism" (Akeidat Yitzchak). Rav Meir Simchah of Dvinsk proved that the wicked son is not expecting an answer, as opposed to the wise and simple sons. In their case, the Torah says, "When your sons asks you tomorrow, saying" (Shemot 13:14 and Devarim 6:20). Here the word "saying" means "provide us an answer" (Sefer Devarim 6:20). There is no question in wicked son's words, just a statement (Mesech Chochmah, Shemot 13:14). It is therefore incorrect to refer to the heretic as a "questioner." He has no question! He is filled with self-confidence and is convinced of his heretical views. A G-d-fearing Jew, however, asks many questions from a foundation of faith; he believes that the answers he seeks will come from a divine source. He deeply yearns to learn

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those things which are testimony to the Exodus - the matzah of freedom, the bitterness of the maror, the passing over of the Angel of Death, and the wondrous history of the Nation of Israel. Secondly, he desires to understand the laws which are beyond human intellect. He nonetheless accepts them, and wants to use his intellect to comprehend as much as is humanly possible. Finally, he wants to understand the statutes, which are logical commandments.

The simple son has questions, but they lack depth: "What is this?" (Shemot 13:14). We therefore show him some of the wonders of our history: "And say to him: Hashem brought us out of Egypt with a strong hand" (ibid.).

The one who does not know how to ask – how pitiful is his state? He doesn't even have a question! His situation is much worse than someone who has questions but no answers. He wants to find the light, but he has no avenues by which to reach spiritual satisfaction. "The desire remains, without possibility of bringing the desire out." The Master of the Universe, however, has mercy on him: "Hashem, You have brought up my soul from *She'ol*" (Tehillim 30:4 and Olat Re'eiyah vol. 1, p. 187).

Even though one who is mired in *She'ol* has sunken deep, he still has a spark of life. Even lower than this nether world is *ha-bor* (literally meaning "the pit," but which also has the meaning of "ignoramus"). Someone at this level does not have the desire of life, an inner striving, or a yearning for the light. The mercies of Hashem can even penetrate these depths, "To even give life to those who have sunken to such depths that they forget both life and the essential, divine light at its foundation." "You have kept me alive so that I do not descend into the pit" (Tehillim ibid. and Olat Re'eiyah ibid.).

The wise son asks, but he knows that there is a heavenly answer to his question. Even though he is one against three, he will win in

רָשָׁע מַה הוּא אוֹמֵר? מַה הָעֲבֹדָה הַזֹּאת לָכֶם? לָכֶם
 וְלֹא לוֹ. וּלְפִי שֶׁהוֹצִיא אֶת־עַצְמוֹ מִן הַכָּלָל, כִּפָּר
 בְּעֶקֶר. וְאִף אֵתָהּ הִקְהָה אֶת־שִׁנְיוֹ, וְאָמַר־לוֹ: בְּעֵבוֹר זֶה,
 עָשָׂה יְיָ לִי, בְּצִאתִי מִמִּצְרָיִם, לִי וְלֹא־לוֹ. אֱלֹהֵי הָיְהִי שָׁם, לֹא
 הָיְהִי נִגְאָל:

————— Commentary —————

the end, because there is a concealed yearning toward the good which is hidden within the recesses of every person's heart.

The wicked son – Part 1

Question: The title of the "wicked son" does not seem to fit the style used to define the other sons. The other three sons are defined by their intellect, while the wicked son is defined by his ethics. What is the reason for the change?

Answer: A corrupt world outlook brings corrupt action along with it. For example, idol worship is not simply a metaphysical error, a failure to understand the Divine, but is itself fundamentally amoral. Since the wicked son removes himself from the community, we "blunt his teeth." But he hasn't done anything yet! He only expressed a thought! True, but as we said, evil thoughts cause evil actions.

The Wicked Son - Part 2

Question: It seems that this son is branded as the "wicked son" because of only one Hebrew word, he says: "What is this to you" instead of "to us?"

Answer: "Do not be a wicked person before yourself" (Pirkei Avot 2:13). Rabbi Ovadiah Bartenura explained: "Do not be wicked by separating yourself from the community and standing alone." Since he is "by himself," he makes himself wicked, as Rabbi Shmuel De

The wicked one, what does he say? What is this service to you?! He says to you and not to him! Since he excluded himself from the community, he has denied everything. You should therefore blunt his teeth and say to him: "It is because of this that Hashem did for me when I left Egypt." For me, but not for him! If he had been there, he would not have been redeemed.

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Ozida expands: "Do not be evil in this characteristic of separating yourself from the community and standing by yourself."

Question: This is still surprising: How does this make him a denier?

Answer: The unity of the Nation of Israel is connected to the oneness of Hashem. Here is Rashi's explanation on the verse: "All of the soul which came with Yaakov when he went down to Egypt" (Bereshit 46:26). "I found in Vayikra Rabbah (the midrash): Esav had six souls (members of his family), and the Torah calls them, 'the souls of his house' in the plural, because they worship many gods. Yaakov had seventy souls, and the Torah calls them, 'soul' (in the singular), because they worshiped one G-d." Rabbi David Tabil of Minsk, the author of "Nachalat David" wrote that the opposite is also true: Just as an idol worshipper denies the oneness of Hashem, the discord and fragmentation found in the Nation of Israel is also a denial of the unity of Hashem. Our connection to the oneness of Hashem obligates the holy Nation of Israel to be united together in love, brotherhood and friendship, tied tightly together like one person without any separation or division. In effect, the unity of the holy Nation of Israel testifies to the oneness of Hashem. In turn, the sin of dispute is truly like idol worship, since dispute is the opposite of unity, and it is as if the disputant testifies about himself that he does not have a part in the G-d of Israel (Beit David, darash 6 quoted

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in Olat Re'iyah vol. 2, p. 468).

At the same time, our Sages taught: "And since he removes himself from the community, likewise you remove him from the community" (Mechilta, Massechet De-Pischa 80, 17). Our Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah, commented on this: "When he removes himself from the community, you may then remove him, but you should never remove him first and have him leave as a result." The essential point to remember is that the wicked son will also always remain a beloved child.

The wicked son - Part 3

"And when your sons say to you: What is this work to you" (Shemot 12:26). "Israel was given bad tidings at this moment: That the Torah would be forgotten in the future by some of its children. And others say that Israel was given good tidings at this moment, since they would have children and grandchildren in the future" (Mechilta ibid.). This last comment is most surprising: The Torah is discussing the wicked son. What good news is there in the fact that we would have children? **Answer:** The wicked son is also your child, and he should be beloved to you.

The wicked son – what does he say?

Question: Why does the Haggadah provide a different answer from the one in the Torah to the wicked son? The Torah says, "And when your sons say to you: What is this work to you? You should say: It is a Pesach offering to Hashem, who passed over the houses of the Children of Israel in Egypt" (Shemot 12:26-27), while the Haggadah says, "You blunt his teeth and say to him: 'For the sake of this, Hashem did for me when I left Egypt' (Shemot 13:8). 'for me' – but not for him. Had he been there, he would not have been redeemed."

Answer: The Vilna Gaon said that the author of the Haggadah felt uncomfortable in explaining the phrase, "You should say: It is a

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Pesach offering to Hashem," as the answer to the wicked son who denies everything and separates himself from the community. It does not make sense to explain the Pesach sacrifice to him and enter into arguments with him. We blunt his teeth. Nonetheless, the question still remains, because the Torah does seem to respond in this way. A close reading of the Torah, however, shows that this is not an answer to him. The Torah does not say: "You say to him" or "You say to your son." It says, "You say." This means, "You say to yourselves," in order not to become weakened by the wicked son's questions. You strengthen yourself with faith.

The blunting of the teeth is also found in the answer to the son who does not know how to ask. In fact, we do not even say the response found in the Haggadah to the wicked son, rather we address the son who does not know how to ask – who is also present. We say to him: "For the sake of this, Hashem did for me... 'for me' – but not for him" – in the third person. If we were directly addressing the wicked son, it would have been expressed in the second person: "For me' – but not for you" (The Vilna Gaon's explanation of the Haggadah on the phrase, "Say to him: For the sake of this").

He denies everything

Question: The wicked son does not seem to deny everything. Denying is the denial of G-d, and he only separates himself from the community. Why does the Haggadah then say that he denies everything?

Answer: Rav Kook explained that separating oneself from the holiness of Klal Yisrael (the entirety of Israel) is denial, since the essential holiness of the Torah and mitzvot is tied to and exists only within Klal Yisrael (Olat Re'eiyah, vol. 2 p. 275). This is what the Mechilta (the halachic Midrash) means when it says: "And since he removes himself from the community, you also remove him from the community" (Mechilta Bo chapter 17 and Olat Re'eiyah vol. 2,

תַּם מַה הוּא אוֹמֵר? מַה זֹאת? וְאִמְרַתְּ אֵלָיו: בְּחִזֵּק יָד
הוֹצִיאָנוּ יְיָ מִמִּצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים:

וְשִׂאֵינוּ יוֹדֵעַ לְשִׂאוֹל, אֶת פְּתַח לוֹ.
שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר:

וְהִגַּדְתָּ לְבִנְךָ, בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא לֵאמֹר: בְּעִבּוֹר זֶה עָשָׂה יְיָ לִי,
בְּצִאתִי מִמִּצְרַיִם:

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p. 433). Nonetheless, the intent is not that we remove him from the community and as a result he will leave, but only after he removes himself, "you also remove him from the community." A heretic does not have a portion in the World to Come (Sanhedrin 90a), but it does not say that he is not a part of Klal Yisrael, because as long as a person is connected to the Nation of Israel, he is part of the community (Rabbenu, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah, *ibid.*, p. 61).

Question: Why were the wicked Jews in Egypt, like Datan and Aviram, and Michah who made an idol and carried it while crossing the Red Sea, redeemed during the Exodus?

Answer: Based on the fact that they were redeemed, it is a sign that they did not separate themselves from the community. Those Jews who did separate themselves from the community did not leave Egypt and died during the plague of darkness which lasted for three days. Only one-fifth of Israel left Egypt and was redeemed.

If he were there, he would not have been redeemed

From Egypt, he would not have been redeemed, but here in the Holy Land, after the Exile, he will be redeemed even against his will. The holiness of the Land will combine with the holiness of Klal Yisrael which is still in the recesses of his heart, and, in the end, he will be redeemed. Anyone who is in the Land of Israel, and is connected to it and the hope of Israel, is truly not in the category

The simple one, what does he say? What is this?

Say to him: "With a strong hand Hashem took us out of Egypt, from the house of bondage."

And the one who does not know how to ask, you must introduce him to the topic, as it is said:

"You shall tell your child on that day, 'For the sake of this, Hashem did for me when I left Egypt.'"

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of those who separate themselves from the community.

The simple son

In the Mechilta (the halachic Midrash – Parashat Bo), this son is called "the simple son," but in the Jerusalem Talmud he is called, "the stupid son" (Pesachim 10:4, 70b). Some explain that if after all of the miracles, salvations, wonders and wars, he still does not see or understand anything, and can only ask, "What is this" – he is stupid, and not just a simple person.

You begin for him

This phrase is written in the Hebrew feminine form since the mother is the first educator of the child. She projects her character onto the child through the basic day-to-day steps of life and she instills exalted feelings within him. These feelings are the foundation for all of the learning which will come later (see Ein Aya of Rav Kook, Shabbat 32 #214). The mother is the one who opens the heart of the tender child who does not know how to ask, and who has yet to attain any Torah (Be'er Shmuel).

For the sake of this, Hashem did for me when I left Egypt

It does not mention in the Haggadah that we were redeemed because we repented. It says: And He saw our affliction, our toil and our

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stress, and Hashem took us out of Egypt (Haggadah and Shemot 2:24). This means that we were redeemed because Hashem loves us, a love which does not depend on anything else. It is essential to understand that the fulfillment of the mitzvot does not create the Nation of Israel. On the contrary, it is incumbent upon us to fulfill the mitzvot, because we are the Nation of Israel. By doing so, we perform the will of Hashem by being faithful to the nature which is ingrained within us. "This people have I created for Myself; they will relate my praise" (Yeshayahu 43:21). In the blessing over the Torah, we do not say, "who gave us His Torah and chose us from among the nations," but "who chose us from among the nations and gave us His Torah."

The Exodus did not occur because we fulfilled mitzvot, but in order for us to fulfill the mitzvot: "For the sake of this, Hashem did for me when I left Egypt" (Shemot 13:8), which Rashi explains: "For the sake of this – because I will fulfill His mitzvot, such as the Pesach sacrifice, matzah and maror." Similarly, when Moshe Rabbenu went out to his brothers, he did not focus on their sins, nor did he use them to justify their suffering: "And he saw their burdens" (Shemot 2:11) and Rashi explains: "He set his eyes and his heart to be grieved for them."

The son who does not know how to ask

Question: The Haggadah says that you begin by saying to him: "For the sake of *this*, Hashem did for me when I left Egypt." How does the "this" awaken and enlighten him?

Answer: It is explained immediately afterwards: "'For the sake of this' – I only say at the time when matzah and maror are before you." This means that we should show him the matzah and maror. His intellect cannot understand abstract matters, but can only grasp practical matters. He should not, however, despair of understanding the greatness of the Exodus. We show him the maror, which

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symbolizes the bitterness of Egypt, and the matzah, which symbolizes the freedom of leaving in haste; and that the bitterness was not for naught, but as a preparation for the freedom (Olat Re'eiyah vol. 2, p. 272). The bitterness which we felt in slavery is also itself a sign of our inner freedom (ibid. p. 282). There is also a slave who loves servitude. "But if the servant says, 'I love my master, my wife and my children – I will not go free'" (Shemot 21:5). If we do not feel the bitterness of slavery, if we love Egypt, if we love the Exile, we will not go free (Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah, ibid., p. 67). At the same time, the Egyptian slavery also prepared us for servitude to Hashem. After all the negative aspects of slavery are removed, the pleasant and pure servitude of Hashem remains, "by which a person also lovingly endures that which is against his will and inclination, which is the foundation of bitterness, to lovingly accept the bitterness of life, when he understands that there is a supreme and exalted ethical purpose" (Olat Re'eiyah vol. 2, pp. 288-289).

Questions

1. What halachah is related to the afikoman?"
2. Which things in the Haggadah are four in number?
3. Why wasn't the Pesach sacrifice offered in the desert?
4. What produce is brought for the "Omer" and why?
5. Who erred in their calculation and left Egypt before it was time?
6. Why do we drink four cups of wine?
7. How much matzah does one eat during the Seder?
8. What is "bi'ur ma'asrot"?
9. Which two of the four sons receive the same answer?
10. What year on our calendar did the Exodus occur?

Answers: 1. We do not eat after the Pesach sacrifice and the matzah at the end of the Seder. 2. Four cups, four questions, four sons, four foremothers. 3. The men were not circumcised due to the northern wind in the desert which would make it too dangerous and the Pesach sacrifices cannot be offered by the

יכול מֵרֵאשׁ חֲדָשׁ, תִּלְמוּד לֹמֵר בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא. אֵי בַּיּוֹם
הַהוּא. יְכוּל מִבְּעוֹד יוֹם. תִּלְמוּד לֹמֵר. בְּעִבּוֹר
זֶה. בְּעִבּוֹר זֶה לֹא אָמַרְתִּי, אֶלָּא בְּשָׁעָה שְׂיֵשׁ מִצָּה וּמְרוֹר
מִנְחִים לְפָנֶיךָ:

מתחלה עוֹבְדֵי עֲבוֹדָה זָרָה הָיוּ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ. וְעַכְשָׁיו
קָרְבָנוּ הַמָּקוֹם לְעֲבוֹדָתוֹ. שְׁנֵאֲמַר: וַיֹּאמֶר

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uncircumcised. 4. Barley, since wheat has yet to grow. 5. The Tribe of Ephraim. 6. a. Corresponding to the four phrases of Redemption by which Hashem promised to take us off. b. Four cups of punishment. c. Four cups of consolation. d. Four kingdoms. e. Four cups mentioned in the cupbearer's dream with Yosef. 7. Two olive-sized pieces for mitzvah of Motzi Matzah, one olive-sized piece for Korech and one olive-sized piece for Afikoman. 8. On Pesach of the fourth and seventh year of the seven year cycle, the tithes must be distributed to their proper destinations. 9. The wicked son and the one who does not know how to ask. 10. 2448.

From Rosh Chodesh

In truth, we should thank Hashem every month and every year, "Even if our mouth were full of song as the sea, we could not thank You sufficiently" (Nishmat, prayer for Shabbat and holidays), but we do not have the ability. We therefore only do so this one day.

At first our ancestors were idol worshippers

Question: Since we already mentioned "we were slaves," why does the Haggadah return to an earlier period when we were idol worshippers?

Answer: The Gemara establishes, "We begin with shame and end with praise." According to Rav, the shame is idol worship, while according to Shmuel, the shame is slavery (Pesachim 11a). Some explain that this follows their general method: Rav emphasized the spiritual side and Shmuel emphasized the physical side. In deciding

One may think that [the discussion of the Exodus] must start from Rosh Chodesh. The Torah therefore says: "On that day." "On that day," however, could mean while it is yet daytime; the Torah therefore says: "It is because of this." The expression "Because of this" can only be said when matzah and maror are placed before you.

At first our ancestors were idol worshippers, but now the Omnipresent One has brought us close to His service,

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Halachah, we therefore follow Rav in Kashrut questions (a spiritual matter) and we follow Shmuel in monetary questions (a physical matter). Rav held that idol worship is a greater shame than physical slavery, and freedom is only worth what we do with it. According to this opinion, someone who causes another to sin is worse than someone who kills another person (Bamidbar Rabbah 21:4). Shmuel held that the lack of physical freedom is more pronounced to the eye, and it also causes spiritual lowliness. Both are the words of the Living G-d, and Hashem, in His mercy, saved us from both of them. But the dispute revolves about which is the main shame (see Maharal, Gevurot Hashem p. 224). The Haggadah accepts both of them and therefore they are both mentioned.

Question: Why don't we mention Rav's opinion first, since the idol worship came first? This indeed seems to be the ruling of the Rambam: "And one needs to begin with shame and conclude with praise. How so? Begin and relate that at first our ancestors in the time of Terach and before him were heretics who followed vanity and pursued idol worship, and conclude with the true belief that Hashem separated us from the nations and brought us close to Him. And also relate that we were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, describe all of the evil which occurred to us, and conclude with the miracles and wonders that were done for us, including our being chosen"

יְהוֹשֻׁעַ אֶל־כָּל־הָעָם. כֹּה אָמַר יְיָ אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּעֶבֶר
הִנָּהָר יֵשְׁבוּ אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם מֵעוֹלָם, תִּרְחַ אָבִי אֲבָרְהָם וְאָבִי
נָחוֹר. וַיַּעֲבֹדוּ אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים: וְאָקַח אֶת־אֲבִיכֶם אֶת־
אֲבָרְהָם מֵעֶבֶר הִנָּהָר, וְאוֹלַךְ אוֹתוֹ בְּכָל־אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן.

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(Hilchot Chametz U-Matzah 7:4). He places idol worship before slavery. But The Rambam in his own text of the Haggadah in the same Mishneh Torah, wrote that "We were slaves" is first. It seems like a contradiction.

Answer: The Rambam's introduction begins: "The text of the Haggadah which Israel customarily recites during the period of the Exile is..." He thus seems to distinguish between the Exile when we start with "we are slaves," and the Redemption when we will begin with "our ancestors were idol worshippers." Why the difference? In the Exile, the most horrible thing is that we are enslaved to the non-Jews. After we merit Redemption, we will then repent; and when we are redeemed in our Land we will be purified from any dross of foreign worship. This means that the Redemption of the Nation precedes repentance. This is part of the dispute between Rav and Shmuel. Rav held: "All of the times [given in the Gemara for the Redemption to arrive] have passed and it is dependent on our repentance and good deeds." There is no particular date, and when Israel completely repents, the Redemption will come. Shmuel disagreed with him: "The mourner need not mourn longer than the proscribed period." Rashi explained that Hashem will not wait forever, even if we are not worthy, He will redeem us" (Sanhedrin 97b). This dispute was already a dispute among "Tana'im" (Rabbis of the time of the Mishnah), and the Halachah was decided like the opinion of Shmuel (Rabbi Eliezer was silent – Sanhedrin 98a). That is, the Redemption precedes repentance, and will liberate us from "we were slaves." The Rambam similarly ruled: "The only difference

as it is said: "And Yehoshua said to all of the people: Thus said Hashem, the G-d of Israel, 'Your fathers used to live on the other side of the river - Terach, the father of Avraham and the father of Nachor - and they served other gods. And I took your father Avraham from beyond the river, and I led him throughout the whole land of Canaan.

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between this world and the period of the Messiah is enslavement to the nations" (Hilchot Melachim 12:2). In this world, we are enslaved to the non-Jews, and in the period of the Messiah we will be a free Nation in our Land. This is the opinion of Shmuel (Sanhedrin 99a), but Rabbi Yochanan maintained that the period of the Messiah will also include great spiritual treasures about which the prophets spoke (ibid.). Shmuel obviously also agreed that all of the words of the prophets will be established, but this will be at a later period, just as the Rambam wrote that in "the period of the King Messiah, when his kingship will be settled...there will be no worldly matters except to know Hashem" (Hilchot Melachim 12:3-5). This is the general principle: Through the physical liberation described in "we were slaves," we will arrive at the supreme spiritual freedom, casting aside "our ancestors were idol worshippers."

"And Yehoshua said"

Question: Why does the Haggadah quote a verse from Yehoshua to teach us that Hashem brought us close to His worship? Is there a lack of verses in the Torah which teach this fact? Furthermore, Yehoshua bin Nun does not even mention worship of Hashem. He only mentions the Land of Israel: "And I took your father, Avraham, from beyond the river and I led him through all of the land of Canaan"?!

Answer: Hashem brought us close to His worship precisely because He brought us to the Land of Israel. Our Sages say: "If it were not

וְאֶרְבֵּה אֶת־זֵרְעוֹ, וְאֶתְּנוּ לוֹ אֶת־יִצְחָק: וְאֶתְּנוּ לְיִצְחָק
 אֶת־יַעֲקֹב וְאֶת־עֵשָׂו. וְאֶתְּנוּ לְעֵשָׂו אֶת־הַר שְׁעִיר, לְרֵשֶׁת
 אוֹתוֹ. וַיַּעֲקֹב וּבְנָיו יָרְדוּ מִצְרָיִם:

בְּרוּךְ שׁוֹמֵר הַבְּטָחָתוֹ לְיִשְׂרָאֵל. בְּרוּךְ הוּא. שֶׁהִקְדִּישׁ
 בְּרוּךְ הוּא חָשַׁב אֶת־הַקֶּץ, לַעֲשׂוֹת כְּמָה שֶׁאָמַר
 לְאַבְרָהָם אֲבִינוּ בְּבְרִית בֵּין הַבְּתָרִים, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וַיֹּאמֶר
 לְאַבְרָם יָדַע תֵּדַע, כִּי־גַר יִהְיֶה זֵרְעֲךָ, בְּאֶרֶץ לֹא לָהֶם,

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for the fact that Israel sinned, only the Five Books of the Torah and the Book of Yehoshua would have been given to them, since the value of the Land of Israel is contained within it" (Nedarim 22b). Yehoshua bin Nun is the one to whom Moshe Rabbenu passed the Torah and who conquered the Land of Israel.

The Holy One, Blessed Be He, calculated the end

Before the time to leave Egypt had arrived, "The voice of my beloved, behold - it is coming, as if leaping over mountains" (Shir Ha-Shirim 2:8). Hashem came to redeem us before the appointed time had arrived, like one who leaps over mountains (Rashi). When Moshe Rabbenu came and said to the Children of Israel: You are being redeemed, they said to him: How can we be redeemed, for the Torah says, "They will enslave them and oppress them for four hundred years" (Bereshit 15:13), and it has only been two hundred and ten years? Moshe Rabbenu said to them: Since He desires your redemption, He is not looking at your calculations, but is indeed leaping over mountains. They also said to him: How can we be redeemed, we do not have any good deeds? Moshe Rabbenu said to them: Since he desires your redemption, He is not looking at

I increased his seed and gave him Yitzchak, and to Yitzchak I gave Yaakov and Esav. To Esav I gave Mount Seir to possess it, and Yaakov and his sons went down to Egypt."

Blessed is He who keeps His promise to Israel, blessed be He! For The Holy One, Blessed be He, calculated the end [of the period of bondage], in order to do as He had said to our father Avraham at the "Covenant between the Pieces," as it is said: "And He said to Avraham, 'You shall know that your seed will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and they will enslave them and make

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your bad deeds (Midrash Rabbah ibid.). The Master of the Universe jumps and leaps over the impediments which block the redemption.

Your seed will be strangers

There are three levels of Exile: 1. "Surely know that your offspring will be strangers in a land not their own." 2. "They will enslave you." 3. "And they will oppress you" (Bereshit 15:13). To be in a land which is not ours is a disaster, but it is possible to be free there. Worse than this is being a slave, deprived of freedom, but you can still have an upright and merciful master. The most difficult is having a master who oppresses the slave. Corresponding to these are three "phrases" of redemption, from the most severe to the less severe: "I will take you out from under the burdens of Egypt" – nullification of the oppression. "I will rescue you from their work" – nullification of slavery. "I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments" – nullification of being strangers in a foreign land. It is not enough, however, to simply remove the negatives. There is therefore the fourth level: "I will take you to Me for a Nation and I will be a G-d to you" (Shemot 6:6-7 and Maharal, Gevurot Hashem and commentary on the Haggadah).

וְעַבְדִּים וְעֲנָוִים אַתֶּם אַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה: וְגַם אֶת־הַגּוֹי אֲשֶׁר
יַעֲבֹדוּ דָן אֲנֹכִי. וְאַחֲרַי כֵּן יֵצְאוּ, בְּרֶכֶשׁ גָּדוֹל:

The matzot are temporarily covered and the wine cup is raised.

וְהִיא שְׁעֵמֶדָה לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ וְלָנוּ. שְׁלֹא אֶחָד בְּלִבָּד,

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Four hundred years

Some people jokingly say: There were two hundred and ten years instead of four hundred years of slavery. If so, there is still another one hundred and ninety year debt which is spread out over the years. Each year before Pesach, we therefore work like slaves cleaning the house.

They will leave with great wealth

Question: Does money really have such a value? Isn't it an insult to promise money to the offspring of Avraham Avinu?

Answer: While it is true that "man does not live on bread alone" (Devarim 8:3), he does live on bread as well. Poverty forces a person to act against his will and against his Creator's will (Eruvin 41b). Worldly possessions can expand a person's mind. A person cannot fully serve his Creator as long as he does not feel good. The Divine Presence only rests on a humble, courageous, wealthy and wise man (Nedarim 38a). This is not necessarily a wealthy capitalist, but a person who feels good and is happy with his portion. This applies, all the more so, to an entire nation. A nation must be "wealthy." Our revered teacher, Rav Kook, explained that just as the Divine Presence only rests on an individual who is courageous, wealthy, and has stature, so too the communal Divine Presence only rests on a nation which has these characteristics. The value of these traits only appears when they serve as the foundation of the Divine, spiritual light (Shabbat Ha-Aretz, introduction p. 13). This is especially true for a nation which was mired in a lowly state of

them suffer, for four hundred years. But I shall also judge the nation whom they shall serve, and after that they will leave with great wealth."

The matzot are temporarily covered and the wine cup is raised.

This [promise] is what has stood by our forefathers and by us! For not one alone has risen against us to

————— Commentary —————

slavery for many years. It must accustom itself to a higher material level, expanding and exalting life in order to reach higher levels of spirituality (Ein Aya, Berachot, chapter 1 #114). One's home must be a respectable house with silver and gold vessels, and the women must have proper dresses for themselves (Shemot 12:35). A woman who is wearing a rag may also feel like a rag. This is obviously all based on not forgetting that physical wealth is the foundation of spiritual wealth. It is therefore possible to understand the meaning of the phrase "great wealth" as spiritual wealth. The Nation of Israel is the spiritual center of the nations of the world, the storehouse for all of the other nations' exalted traits. Therefore, when Israel was lacking certain characteristics, "There was a need for its dispersion into Exile so that it could overcome its shortcomings by absorbing all of the other nations' positive attributes, thereby perfecting its character. The perfection of character and the lengthy purification of the national soul in the fiery furnace of the Exile create the possibility of the return of the supreme light (Orot Ha-Kodesh vol. 3, p. 367).

For not one alone (lo echad bilvad) has risen against us to destroy us

Ha-Gaon Ha-Rav Akiva Yosef Schlesinger said homiletically: "Not one" (lo echad) – when we are not one, i.e. not united, this alone (bilvad) rises against us to destroy us.

עֲמֵד עָלֵינוּ לְכַלּוֹתֵנוּ. אֶלָּא שְׁבַכְל דּוֹר וָדוֹר, עוֹמְדִים
עָלֵינוּ לְכַלּוֹתֵנוּ. וְהַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא מְצִילֵנוּ מִיָּדָם.

צֵא וְלִמַּד, מֵה בִּקֵּשׁ לְבֹן הָאֲרָמִי לַעֲשׂוֹת לִיעֲקֹב
אָבִינוּ. שְׁפָרְעָה לֹא גָזַר אֱלֹהִים עַל
הַזְּכָרִים, וְלָבֹן בִּקֵּשׁ לַעֲקֹר אֶת־הַכֹּל, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: אֲרָמִי אֵבֶד

————— Commentary —————

In every generation they rise up to destroy us

They sometimes try to destroy us physically with persecutions and holocausts, and they sometimes burn our souls both by having us abandon our beliefs and through assimilation (Ha-Chida, commentary on the Haggadah). Therefore, we must wage war both in front of us and behind us.

Lavan wanted to uproot everything – Part 1

Question: How did Lavan want to uproot everything?

Answer: This has a double meaning: He wanted Yaakov to give up the faith of his ancestors and bring him back to idol worship; and he wanted to kill him. The Vilna Gaon said that "The action of the fathers is a sign for the children" and we must therefore beware of the non-Jews who appear as beloved friends, like Lavan who appeared as Yaakov's friend, but hated him in his heart and wanted to destroy him. One who hates in secret is more dangerous than a clear enemy, since you are not wary of him. We also should not think that if non-Jews try to bring us close and are good to us that it will make them into our loved ones. Yaakov became close to Lavan and married his daughters, and yet his father-in-law hated him and wanted to kill him.

Question: Why did Lavan, and following his example, all anti-Semites throughout the generations, want to uproot everything?

destroy us but in every generation they rise against us to destroy us; and The Holy One, Blessed Be He, saves us from their hand!

The cup of wine is put down and the matzah is uncovered.

GO forth and learn what Lavan the Aramean wanted to do to our father Yaakov. Pharaoh had issued a decree against the male children only, but Lavan wanted to uproot everything - as it is said: "The Aramean wished

————— Commentary —————

Answer: The Maharal explains that their opposition to us is not based on a specific reason to which a cause can be found. It is an unprincipled opposition. "Know...Israel has those who oppose [them], not like those who are opposed for a reason, but Israel has haters and enemies without reason...and so too the hatred of Lavan was without reason, since Yaakov only did great good, and [Lavan] pursued him. And that which Lavan said: 'Your sons are my sons and your daughters are my daughters,' when The Holy One, blessed be He, changed his mind in a dream and He said: 'Take care...' And if [Hashem] did not warn him, the sons would not have been his sons and the daughters would not have been his daughters" (Gevurot Hashem, chapter 54, pp. 236-237). In every land where there have been Jews, they have brought goodness and blessing, and in return these haters and enemies persecuted them, killed them, and stole from them. The Rambam explained that the nations' hatred of the Nation of Israel has the hatred of the word of Hashem as its source. Since Hashem singled us out for his mitzvot and exalted us above every nation with His Torah, all of the nations hate us on account of their jealousy, "And their desire is to wage war with Hashem and to argue with Him – but He is G-d, and who can argue with Him...as Amalek, Sisra, Sanchariv, Nebuchadnezzar,

אָבִי, וַיֵּרֵד מִצְרַיִם, וַיִּגְרַשׁ שָׁם בְּמַתֵּי מֵעֵט.

————— Commentary —————

Titus, Hadrian, and many others like them did" (Igeret Teiman, Mossad Ha-Rav Kook edition, pp. 115-116). Rav Kook also wrote that until the future Redemption, we only teach the world that they have moral and ethical obligations, which flow from the knowledge of the true G-d. The world does not want to accept obligations, for even if they accept them, they will still harbor resentment against the one who arouses to these obligations, which do not allow the barbarian soul to do as it wishes (Orot, Orot Yisrael, 5:15 and see Orot Ha-Techiya 2, 54).

Lavan wanted to uproot everything - Part 2

Our Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah, explained that Lavan truly wanted to uproot "everything," because we are connected to everything. He wanted to remove Israel from its eternal source. On the surface, Lavan appears to be a person of good character. He draws Yaakov close, and he says to him, "It is better for me to give her to you than for me to give her to another man" (Bereshit 29:19). We can, however, see from this the true depths of his impurity and evil. Lavan is like the angel of death with tremendous strength and a powerful spiritual ambition to uproot everything; to increase impurity, evil, idol worship, and evil character traits in the world. The Master of the Universe created the souls of our foremothers, Rachel and Leah, holy souls, aristocratic souls, souls who sanctify Hashem's Name, in complete contrast to their father's way of life. He was obviously greatly distressed that his daughters' path was the opposite of his, and there was nothing he could do to change this miserable situation. Then his sister's son arrived, a man of exalted stature, and within a few minutes Lavan recognized him as someone with the same powerful soul filled with holiness, moral righteousness, and purity as his daughters had. What a disaster! Here was another

to destroy my father; and he went down to Egypt and

————— Commentary —————

person whose goal it was to increase the sanctification of Hashem's Name in the world! This caused him immense grief – no less than he was aggrieved by his daughters. The depth of his wickedness appeared here: "It is better for me to give her to you than for me to give her to another man." He realized that the situation was hopeless with his daughters. Regardless of the situation in which they found themselves in life, they would increase the number of righteous people in the world, and thereby increase the sanctification of Hashem's Name. Whomever they married would be transformed into righteous men. Better that the righteous should get married to each other... (Sichot Rabbenu - Bereshit, pp. 261-262).

The Aramean wished to destroy my father

Question: Why does the Haggadah bring the explanations of our Sages about these verses from "Mikra Bikkurim" – the paragraph recited when bringing the first fruits to the Temple – instead of quoting the verses which describe the Exodus?

Answer: A field owner will definitely come to Jerusalem to bring the first fruits of his Land in order to show that he gives thanks and recognizes that all of the good comes from the Master of the Earth and we are His servants. We are obligated on the night of Pesach to give thanks to Hashem for all of the good He performed for us, and the Haggadah is therefore organized around the words of one who brings the first fruits (Rabbi Yitzchak Abarbanel). The first fruits are small in quantity, but they have incredible value to the Master of the Universe. In general, a Jew must constantly be in a state of thanksgiving to Hashem for all of the good which He has done for us. Gratitude is the foundation of everything and the first thing with which a Jew begins his day when he says, "Modeh Ani – I thank."

וַיְהִי שֵׁם לְגוֹי גָדוֹל, עֲצוּם וְרַב:

וַיֵּרֶד מִצְרַיִם, אָנוּס עַל פִּי הַדְּבָר.

וַיֵּרֶד שָׁם. מִלְמַד שֶׁלֹּא יֵרֵד יַעֲקֹב אֲבִינוּ לְהִשְׁתַּקֵּעַ
בְּמִצְרַיִם, אֲלֵא לְגוֹר שָׁם, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר:
וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֶל־פַּרְעֹה, לְגוֹר בְּאֶרֶץ בְּאֵנוּ, כִּי אֵין מְרַעָה
לְצֹאן אֲשֶׁר לְעַבְדֶּיךָ, כִּי כָבֵד הָרַעַב בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן. וְעַתָּה,
יִשְׁבוּ־נָא עַבְדֶּיךָ בְּאֶרֶץ גֹּשֶׁן:

————— Commentary —————

And descended to Egypt

Question: If traveling outside of Israel is considered a spiritual descent, why then did Yaakov Avinu travel there?

Answer: He was commanded to by Hashem. Yaakov Avinu feared descending until Hashem told him: "Have no fear descending to Egypt, for I will make you a great nation there. I will descend with you to Egypt, and I will also surely bring you up" (Bereshit 46:3-4). This is a temporary requirement in order to create the Nation of Israel, who would return to its Land in the end (see Sichot Rabbenu - Bereshit p. 396, 410).

Forced by Divine decree

Question: Yaakov Avinu mourned for twenty-two years over his son Yosef. When he was informed that Yosef was still alive, he was revived. "And Yisrael said: Enough! My son Yosef is still alive! I will go and see him before I die" (Bereshit 45:28). He traveled to Be'ersheva and "he offered sacrifices to the G-d of his father Yitzchak" (ibid. 46:1). Why did he sacrifice to the G-d of Yitzchak and not the G-d of Avraham?

sojourned there, few in number; and he became there a nation - great and mighty and numerous."

"And he descended to Egypt" forced by Divine decree.

"And he sojourned there" - this teaches that our father Yaakov did not go down to Egypt to settle, but only to live there temporarily. Thus it is said: "They said to Pharaoh, 'We have come to sojourn in the land, for there is no pasture for your servants' flocks because the hunger is severe in the land of Canaan; and now, please, let your servants dwell in the land of Goshen.'"

————— Commentary —————

Answer: Avraham temporarily left Israel, but Yitzchak was commanded not to leave: "Hashem appeared to him and said, "Do not descend to Egypt, dwell in the Land that I will tell you" (Bereshit 26:2). Yaakov Avinu feared that if he went down to Egypt, his offspring would not leave there. Hashem therefore said to him, "Have no fear descending to Egypt...and I will also surely bring you up" (Bereshit 46:3-4). In truth, after a long period when the Nation of Israel returned to its Land, to our distress, four-fifths of the Nation remained in Egypt. In our time as well, a large part of the Nation of Israel remains, to our distress, in Exile and Hashem needs to dislodge them with a strong hand and an outstretched arm.

To live there temporarily (Devarim26:5)

"This teaches that Yaakov did not descend to settle there, but only to live temporarily" (Sifri ibid.). Ha-Gaon Rabbi Meir Simchah of Dvinsk explained that this is how Jews have acted throughout the generations in every Exile: They knew that they did not descend to settle there, but to live there until the Redemption arrives. They did not consider themselves as citizens. Therefore, "and they [the

בְּמַתִּי מֵעֵץ . כְּמָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: בְּשִׁבְעִים נֶפֶשׁ, יֵרְדוּ
 אֲבֹתֶיךָ מִצְרַיִם. וְעַתָּה, שָׂמַד יִי
 אֱלֹהֶיךָ, כְּכֹכְבֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם לְרַב.

————— Commentary —————

Egyptians] became disgusted because of the Children of Israel" (Shemot 1:12), the [Egyptians] considered [them] as thorns (Sotah 11a). Just as a thorn does not become entangled and take root like other plants and trees, Israel does not become entangled and take root in another nation. They did not become like Egypt. They were different in their character and their feelings to the point that they were like a thorn in the Egyptian's eyes. Yaakov Avinu, who greatly feared assimilation, therefore instructed his sons to distinguish themselves in dress and by their names in order to be a nation in-and-of-itself. They would consider themselves strangers in a foreign land. This helped in a short exile of a few hundred years, but not for a long exile of two thousand years. Hashem, in His great kindness, therefore caused the non-Jews to hate us and not allow us to rest in the lands of the Exile. Ha-Gaon Rabbi Meir Simchah wrote, "It is the way of Divine Providence that they [the Jewish people] will be allowed to rest for one or two hundred years. Following this, a raging wind will arise and create great waves. It will destroy, cause havoc, overflow, and have no mercy, until they are scattered and alone. They will run, they will flee to a faraway place, and they will reunite there. They will become a Nation, and the Torah will increase. Their wisdom will be praise-worthy to the point that they will forget that they are strangers in a foreign land. They will think that it is their point of origin, not expecting the spiritual salvation of Hashem at a designated time. An even stronger wind will then come. It will remind each one in a thundering voice: 'You are a Jew and who made you a man? You went to a land which you do not know!' This is how the State of Israel unfolds and thus is its existence among the nations. "They will think that Berlin

"Few in number" as it is said: "Your fathers went down to Egypt with seventy persons, and now, Hashem, your G-d, has made you as numerous as the stars of heaven."

————— Commentary —————

is Jerusalem, and then a stormy and raging wind will come and uproot them. It will place them in a faraway nation where they will know that they are strangers and where the unknown language is not our holy tongue." This is how Rabbi Meir Simchah explained the verse, "I will not have been repulsed by them nor will I have rejected them to obliterate them" (Vayikra 26:44). The non-Jews loath us and spit us out from place to place, not because Hashem wants to destroy us – G-d forbid, but on the contrary, "because I am Hashem, your G-d" (ibid.), in order for us to remain with Hashem (Meshech Chochmah to Vayikra 26:44).

As numerous as the stars

Question: Why are we compared to the stars?

Answer: Every star is different, as opposed to sand, in which every single grain is quite similar. It is estimated that there are approximately one hundred billion galaxies and within each galaxy there are at least one hundred billion stars. If so, the number of stars is estimated at ten to the twenty-second power. To the human eye they appear similar, but each star could have a book written about it. So too, each Jew is a complete world. This creates problems for the leader, when each person is a star in-and-of-himself, to the point that Moshe Rabbenu says: "I cannot carry you by myself" (Devarim 1:9). And why is this? Because "Hashem, your G-d, has multiplied you and now you are like the stars of the sky in abundance" (ibid. 10), and "Hashem, the G-d of your forefather, will add to you a thousand times" (ibid. 11).

וַיְהִי שֵׁם לְגוֹי. מִלְמַד שֶׁהָיוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל מְצַיְנִים
שָׁם:

גָּדוֹל עָצוֹם, כְּמָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, פָּרוּ
וַיִּשְׂרְצוּ, וַיִּרְבוּ וַיַּעֲצְמוּ, בְּמֵאֵד
מֵאֵד, וַתִּמְלֵא הָאָרֶץ אֹתָם:

וְרַב. כְּמָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: רַבְּבָה כְּצִמְחַ הַשָּׂדֶה נִתְתִּיף,
וַתִּרְבֵּי, וַתִּגְדְּלֵי, וַתִּבְאֵי בְּעַדֵי עַדְיִים: שְׂדֵים
נִכְנוּ, וּשְׁעָרַי צִמְחָ, וְאֵת עַרְס וְעָרְיָה:

————— Commentary —————

Israel was distinguishable there

This means "distinguishable in their dress" (Orchot Chaim – Kol Bo). Even though they had sunk to the forty-ninth level of impurity, they remained faithful to Jewish clothing and to the modesty which is intertwined into the fabric of Israel's character (see Rashi to Sanhedrin 74b and "For Modesty and Purity in Israel" in Or Le-Netivati of our Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah, p. 277). They were obviously also distinguishable in other ways: They did not change their names and their language, and they continued to perform brit milah (Seder Eliyahu Rabbah, chapter 21).

And the Children of Israel were fruitful and increased and multiplied and became very mighty

Our Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah, explained that in quantity there is also quality. The Children of Israel were already beginning to be considered a nation: "Behold, the Nation, the Children of Israel" (Shemot 1:9). This was how we began to be a communal entity. Our revered teacher, Rav Kook, wrote, "In order to understand the concept of 'the community' at its highest level, one needs to have

"And he became there a nation" - this teaches that Israel was distinguished there.

"Great, mighty," as it is said: "And the Children of Israel were fruitful and increased and multiplied and became very mighty, and the land became filled with them."

"And numerous," as it is said: ["I passed over you and saw you wallowing in your blood, and I said to you 'Through your blood you shall live,' and I said to you 'Through your blood you shall live!'"] "I caused you to thrive like the plants of the field, and you increased and

————— Commentary —————

the accompanying tools which set up the community as a complete nation ...These tools are: The Land and the quantity" (Olat Re'eiyah vol. 1, p. 387).

Through your blood you shall live

This is the blood of "Brit Milah" (circumcision). When things occur because of an "awakening from above," we need to participate, one way or another. We are obligated to take part and not simply be passive. For the great miracle of the splitting of the Red Sea, Nachshon ben Aminadav had to lead by example. "Why are you crying out to me? Speak to the Children of Israel and let them travel" (Shemot 14:15). In the Redemption of our time as well, all of the miracles that come from the heavens are coupled with our self-sacrifice.

Like the plants of the field

The more you cut them, the more they sprout. "And as much as

וְאֶעֱבֹר עָלֶיךָ וְאֶרְאֶה מִתְבוֹסֶסֶת בְּדַמֶּיךָ וְאֶמַּר לְךָ בְּדַמֶּיךָ
חַי וְאֶמַּר לְךָ בְּדַמֶּיךָ חַי.

————— Commentary —————

they inflicted it, so it would increase and spread out" (Shemot 1:12). "The bush was burning in fire, but the bush was not consumed" (Shemot 3:2). It is impossible to destroy the Nation of Israel. "The Eternal One of Israel will not lie or change his mind" (Shmuel 1 15:29).

But you remained naked and bare

Clothing represents a person's outer appearance, and this is how the Children of Israel were in Egypt: Poor in mitzvot and good deeds, but in the depths of their souls remained "a fire of holiness which burned in the heart of every Jew, even one who did not know his own nature or substance" (Olat Re'eyah vol. 2, pp. 277-278). The Holy One, blessed be He, therefore, did not abandon us in Egypt. Despite all of our impurity, He did not detach or separate from us (Rabbenu, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah, *ibid.*, p. 64).

Rashi explained in his commentary on the Torah: "Rabbi Matya ben Cheres used to say: The Tanach says, 'Now when I passed by you and looked at you, and behold, your time was the time of love' (Yechezkel 16:8), [the time] has come [to fulfill] the oath which I swore to Avraham, that I will redeem his children, but you did not have mitzvot in which to be engaged so that you could be redeemed, as it says: 'But you remained naked and bare' (*ibid.*). He therefore gave us two commandments, the blood of the Pesach sacrifice and the blood of circumcision, to be circumcised on that night, as it says, "'wallowing in your bloods' (*ibid.*), in two bloods" (Rashi to Shemot 12:6).

Some explain that there is difference between "naked" (*arom*) and "bare" (*ervah*). "Arom" is not wearing an outer garment (see

grew and became very beautiful, with your bosom fashioned and your hair grown long, but you remained naked and bare."

————— Commentary —————

Yeshayahu 20:3), while "ervah" is not wearing any clothing at all. Hashem therefore gave us two mitzvot: The Pesach sacrifice, which comes periodically, is like an outer garment which can be removed, and the blood of circumcision, which is always there, is like an under garment which cannot be removed. Nonetheless, the redemption was not on account of our merits, but because of the treasured nature of Israel, as the Rambam writes at length about Avraham Avinu who recognized his Creator: "He would go from city to city and from country to country and call to the people until he came to the land of Canaan...and when the people would gather around him and ask him about his words, he would offer an explanation to each of them according to their understanding until they returned to the path of truth. Thousands and tens of thousands gathered around him, and they were the men of the house of Avraham (see Bereshit 12:5 – "and the souls that they made in Charan"). He implanted in their hearts this great principle (faith in Hashem), and he wrote books about it and taught it to his son Yitzchak. Yitzchak sat, taught and cautioned [others]. Yitzchak taught Yaakov and appointed him to teach, and he sat, taught, and strengthened those who gathered around him. And Yaakov Avinu taught all of his sons, and he chose Levi and appointed him as the leader. He placed him in a yeshiva to teach the way of Hashem and to observe the mitzvot of Avraham. He commanded his sons that the leadership should not depart from the offspring of Levi, so that the teachings would not be forgotten. This idea gained strength among the children of Yaakov and those who gathered around them, and there became a nation within the world which knew Hashem." The Nation included Yaakov's children and righteous converts from the nations, and the

וַיִּרְעוּ אֶת־נֹוֹ הַמִּצְרַיִם וַיַּעֲנוּנוּ. וַיִּתְּנוּ עָלֵינוּ עֲבָדָה
קָשָׁה:

וַיִּרְעוּ אֶת־נֹוֹ הַמִּצְרַיִם. כְּמָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: הִבָּה נִתְחַכְּמָה
לוֹ. פְּרִי־רֵבָה, וְהִיָּה כִּי־תִקְרָאנָה מִלְחָמָה,
וְנוֹסֵף גַּם הוּא עַל־שִׁנְאֵינוּ, וְנִלְחַם־בָּנוּ וְעָלָה מִן־הָאָרֶץ:

————— Commentary —————

Nation's uniqueness was that its nature was faith in Hashem. "I created this Nation for Me, they relate My praise" (Yeshayahu 43:21). The Rambam continued: "When Israel extended their stay in Egypt, they learned their ways and worshipped idols like them, with the exception of the tribe of Levi who stood firmly by the mitzvot of the forefathers and never worshipped idols."

Within a short time, the principle that Avraham implanted would have been uprooted and the offspring of Yaakov would have returned to the errors and distortions of the world." If so, since the definition of the Nation of Israel is "A Nation of those who know its G-d" (Daniel 11:32), and they returned to worshipping idols, you might think that we would cease to be the Nation of Israel, with the exception of the tribe of Levi who continued to fit this description. The Rambam, however, did not mention such an idea, but instead wrote: "Because of Hashem's love for us, and to keep the oath He made to Avraham Avinu, He made Moshe Rabbenu, the master of all of the prophets, and sent him. When Moshe Rabbenu prophesied and Hashem chose Israel as His inheritance, He crowned them with mitzvot and informed them of the way to serve Him" (Rambam, Hilchot Avodah Zarah – Laws of Idol Worship 1:3).

If so, the choosing of the Nation of Israel is eternal, because of Hashem's love for us and His oath to our forefathers. This means that the traits of the forefathers are eternally implanted within the

"The Egyptians made us evil and they made us suffer, and they put hard work upon us." "The Egyptians made us evil," as it is said: "Come, let us act cunningly with [the people] lest they multiply and, if there should be a war against us, they will join our enemies, fight against us and leave the land."

————— Commentary —————

nature of Israel. Hashem therefore "made" Moshe Rabbenu, because Moshe Rabbenu is not like all the other people who lived throughout the generations. Hashem created a unique soul within him: a soul capable of ascending to the heavens and receiving the Torah for the Nation of Israel. We see that it is not because we are worthy of fulfilling the mitzvot that we are the Nation of Israel, but just the opposite, because we are the Nation of Israel, we were given the mitzvot out of Hashem's love. We are certainly obligated to fulfill the mitzvot, and without them we live contrary to our inner nature. We therefore received two mitzvot before the Exodus in Hashem's kindness towards us. We were "naked of Torah and bare of mitzvot" (Mechilta, Parashat Bo, parashah 5). The remedy to this was these two mitzvot, the Pesach sacrifice and brit milah, which we fulfilled with self-sacrifice above all consideration.

The Egyptians made us evil

It should have said, "They acted evilly towards us," but our Rabbis explained in Midrash Ha-Gadol: "They made us evil" (on Bereshit 18:19). In a situation where we lacked the protection of the Torah and mitzvot, the weakness, corruption, and impurity of Egypt overcame us. The Egyptians damaged us with their impurity (Olar Re'eiya vol. 2, p. 278 and Rabbenu, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah ibid. 65). Another answer: The Egyptians "made us evil" by claiming that we were planning to attack them, to stab them in the back, like a fifth

וַיַּעֲנוּנוּ. כִּמָּה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וַיִּשְׂימוּ עָלָיו שָׂרֵי מִסִּים,
 לְמַעַן עֲנֹתוֹ בְּסִבְלָתָם: וַיִּבֶן עָרֵי מִסְכָּנוֹת
 לְפָרְעָה, אֶת־פֶּתֶם וְאֶת־רַעְמֵסִס:

————— Commentary —————

column. The Nazis, may their name be blotted out, made the same exact claim, saying that this is what we perpetrated against them during the First World War. Even before this time, Ha-Rav Shimshon Raphael Hirsch wrote: "Even in later generations, nations will bring accusations against the Jews, saying: They will join forces with the enemies of the state, with the Arabs, the Turks, the French" (commentary on Shemot 1:10).

More answers:

1. The Netziv explained that they presented us as evil in the eyes of the world. As is known, the method of Anti-Semites is to defame us.
2. As a result of this, they made us evil in our own eyes, because we lost self-confidence. We began to think that we were evil.
3. Even worse than this, the Maharam Alshich said that they made us evil by influencing us until we learned their ways and actually became evil. The good traits which are intrinsic to our character were erased.
4. And Ha-Rav Meir Bar Ilan explained that "Vayare'u" (usually understood as "and they made us evil") can be understood differently. It can derive from the word "Re'ut" meaning "friendship." They tried to make us their friends, so we would be similar to them and assimilate. In our time as well, the West tries to swallow us up into their culture – and The Holy One, blessed be He, has saved us from their hands.

Questions

1. Which things which occurred during the Exodus relate to children?

"And they oppressed us," as it is said: "They set taskmasters over [the people of Israel] to make them suffer with their burdens, and they built storage cities for Pharaoh, Pitom and Ramses."

————— Commentary —————

2. Why do we wear white at the Seder?
3. What did the Children of Israel perform in Egypt to distance themselves from idol worship?
4. Which seven places in the Land of Israel are mentioned in the Haggadah?
5. Which three places outside of Israel are mentioned in the Haggadah?

Answers: 1. a. The order to the midwives: "If it is a boy, kill him" (Shemot 1:16). b. "Every newborn boy, throw into the river" (ibid. 22). c. The miracle of Moshe in the basket. d. Pharaoh had tzara'at (skin disease), and he killed Jewish babies and washed himself with their blood (Rashi to Shemot 2:23). e. When the Jews did not make the required number of bricks, the Egyptians placed babies into the walls in place of bricks (People often mention this, but its source is unclear, because Yalkut Shimoni [Tehillim 685] says that the Egyptians put the Jews who did not complete the work into the building instead of the bricks, and the Gemara in Sanhedrin [101b] says that only Michah was being crushed under a building). f. They burned babies in the fiery furnace. g. Jewish men separated from their wives to avoid having babies who would suffer (Shemot Rabbah 1:12). h. "With our children and our elders we will go, with our sons and daughters...we will go" (Shemot 10:9). i. "And tell your son" (Shemot 13:8). 2. a. Color of holiday clothing. b. Remembrance of the Cohain's clothing in the Temple. c. A remembrance of the day of death. d. White is the color of freedom. 3. The Pesach sacrifice. 4. Jerusalem, Bnei Brak, Merchayah, Rosh Pina, Nov, the Jordan and the Negev. 5. Egypt, Pithom, and Raamses.

And they oppressed us

Questions: How did the Nation of Israel allow itself to be oppressed? Why didn't the people revolt? How did they agree to be moved to work camps and death camps? How did the Egyptians succeed in reigning over a "large and powerful" nation?

————— Commentary —————

Answer: It is clear that the Egyptians, and those who followed them throughout history, did not enact their cruel plan all at once. "A new king arose over Egypt who did not know Yosef" (Shemot 1:8). Pharaoh created an evil and cunning plan, pretending that he did not know Yosef and all of the good which he did for Egypt: "Let us deal wisely with them" (ibid. 10). First stage: Raising taxes, "They placed taskmasters over them" (ibid. 11). This was done under the guise of improving the nation's economy, but its true purpose was in order to oppress the Jewish people (Ha-Rav Shimshon Rafael Hirsch). The taxes were paid through work. Second stage: They raised the level of the work and they made us into slaves. Third stage: They made us build "storage cities" (ibid.), huge store houses for produce. Fourth stage: "The Egyptians made the Children of Israel serve them with back-breaking work" (ibid. 13). They not only wanted to break their bodies, but also to break their spirit (see Rashi). They quieted opposition in a measured way. After two hundred and ten years, the Nation of Israel had a lowly, exilic soul. It is impossible to shake off this state in an instant, as the Rambam said: "It is not a man's nature to be raised, enslaved with mortars and bricks and similar things, then instantly to wash his hands from that filth and wage war against the children of giants" (Moreh Nevuchim 3, 32). Rabbi Avraham ibn Ezra also asked: Why were the Jews scared when they saw the Egyptians pursuing them at the Red Sea? Why didn't they take this opportunity to pay them back? They had six hundred thousand men of army age, and they left Egypt armed! He answers: "Because the Egyptians were the masters of Israel, and this generation which left Egypt learned from its youth to suffer the burden of Egypt. How could it wage war with its master? Israel had become weak and was not learned in warfare. Look, Amalek came with a small nation, and if it were not for Moshe's prayer, it would have defeated Israel. Hashem caused all of the males who left Egypt to die, because they did not have the strength to wage war with the

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Canaanites. Then a different generation – the generation of the desert – arose, which had not experienced Exile and had an exalted soul (Rabbi Avraham ibn Ezra to Shemot 14:13). Rabbi Avraham ibn Ezra also emphasized that the only Jew who could stand up to the Egyptians was Moshe Rabbenu. He was not scared to kill the Egyptian because he did not grow up among slaves. He was a free person his entire life by Divine Providence. Ibn Ezra wrote: "The thoughts of Hashem are deep, and who can understand His secrets? It is possible that Hashem caused Moshe to be raised in a palace so that his soul would be on a higher level, not for it to be low and accustomed to be in a house of slavery. Look, Moshe killed the Egyptians because they stole, and then saved the daughters [of Yitro] from the hand of the shepherds who stole the water which the women had drawn for their flocks." (Rabbi Avraham ibn Ezra to Shemot 2:3).

In this context, it is possible to add the comments of the Netziv on the words of Moshe Rabbenu: "But they will not believe me and they will not listen to my voice, for they will say, Hashem did not appear to you" (Shemot 4:1). He explained: "And the matter is clear that Moshe did not say that they will not believe in the redemption at all, since this is what they were requesting. Rather Moshe said that they will not believe Moshe that Hashem appeared to him. This is because they did not know that Moshe grew up with the Torah that was passed on from their forefathers. His holiness and righteousness were not known, since in his youth he grew up in Pharaoh's palace, and he dressed and spoke like an Egyptian. From a human perspective, it was more appropriate that Hashem would appear to Aharon, the holy one of Hashem, who prophesied while still in Egypt...This was Moshe Rabbenu's claim that Israel would say: 'Hashem did not appear to you.'" If so, why was Moshe Rabbenu punished for this by being inflicted with tzara'at (skin disease) for

וַיִּתְּנוּ עֲלֵינוּ עֲבֹדָה קָשָׁה. כְּמָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וַיַּעֲבֹדוּ
מִצְרַיִם אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּפָרֶךְ:

וַנִּצְעַק אֱלֹהֵי אֲבֹתֵינוּ, וַיִּשְׁמַע יי אֶת־קִלְנוּ,
וַיִּרְא אֶת־עֲנֵינוּ, וַאֲת־עֲמִלְנוּ, וַאֲת לַחֲצֵנוּ:

וַנִּצְעַק אֱלֹהֵי אֲבֹתֵינוּ, כְּמָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וַיְהִי
בַיָּמִים הָרַבִּים הָהֵם, וַיָּמַת מֶלֶךְ מִצְרַיִם,
וַיֵּאָנְחוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִן־הָעֲבֹדָה וַיִּזְעֻקוּ. וַתַּעַל שׁוֹעֲתָם
אֶל־הָאֱלֹהִים מִן־הָעֲבֹדָה:

————— Commentary —————

suspecting them? The Netziv answered that we should not think that we know better than Hashem. As the prophet Yeshayahu said: "For My thoughts are not your thoughts and My ways are not your ways" (Yeshayahu 55:8). The Netziv applied this to our time as well: "And so too at this time, after we see within His strategy, that the heart of the Generous One is performing wonders for the benefit of the settlement [of Israel], and inclining the heart of the ruling authority and its ministers to agree to this, His signs are His words...and we should not try to be wise, saying that it needs to occur in a different way" (Igeret Acharit Ke-Bereshit, Kovetz Shivat Tzion vol. 1, pp. 17-18 and in a shortened form in Ha-Emek Davar – Shemot 4:1).

And we cried out

Moshe Rabbenu also cried out: "Why have you dealt ill with this Nation...for since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Your name, he has done evil to this people, and You have not saved Your Nation at all" (Shemot 5:22-23). He also said: I read the book of Bereshit, and I saw that the generation of the flood, the generation of the Tower of Babel and the people of Sedom were punished, but this

"And they put hard work upon us," as it is said: "The Egyptians made the children of Israel work with rigor. And they made their lives bitter with hard work, with mortar and with bricks and all manner of service in the field, all their work which they made them work with rigor."

"And we cried out to Hashem, the G-d of our fathers, and Hashem heard our voice and saw our suffering, our labor and our oppression."

"And we cried out to Hashem, the G-d of our fathers," as it is said: "During that long period, the king of Egypt died; and the children of Israel groaned because of their servitude, and they cried out. And their cry for help from servitude rose up to G-d."

————— Commentary —————

was done by the attribute of strict justice. But what did the Nation do to be enslaved? Why weren't Yishmael and Esav enslaved? I know that you will save them in the future, but why don't You care about those placed under a building? The attribute of strict justice wanted to injure Moshe. Hashem saw that Moshe Rabbenu spoke this way on account of the pain of Israel, and He took on the attribute of mercy (Shemot Rabbah 5:22), because a person is not punished for actions caused by pain (Midrash Ha-Gadol, Shemot 6:9).

Questions

1. Which tribe was not enslaved?
2. What is "avodat parech"?
3. What did the midwives do besides refusing Pharaoh's order?
4. Were Avram and Yocheved related before they were married?

וַיִּשְׁמַע יי אֶת־קִלְנוֹ. כִּמָּה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וַיִּשְׁמַע אֱלֹהִים
אֶת־נִאֲקָתָם, וַיִּזְכֹּר אֱלֹהִים אֶת־בְּרִיתוֹ, אֶת־
אֲבֹרָהֶם, אֶת־יִצְחָק, וְאֶת יַעֲקֹב:

וַיֵּרָא אֶת־עֲנַיִנוֹ: זו פְּרִישׁוֹת דָּרָד אֶרֶץ. כִּמָּה
שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים
אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל. וַיֵּדַע אֱלֹהִים:

וְאֶת־עַמְלָנוֹ. אֵלּוּ הַבְּנִים. כִּמָּה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: כָּל־
הַבֵּן הַיְלֹוד הַיְאֹרָה תִּשְׁלִיכֶהוּ,
וְכָל־הַבַּת תִּחְיֶינָה:

————— Commentary —————

5. On what date was Moshe Rabbenu placed in the basket in the Nile?

Answers: 1. The tribe of Levi. 2. They made the men perform the women's work and the women perform the men's work (Rashi). 3. They also provided water and food (Rashi). 4. Yocheved was his aunt and before the giving of the Torah they were permitted to marry. 5. On the sixth of Sivan (which is Shavuot). He was born on the seventh of Adar and was hidden for three months.

*Every boy that is born, you shall throw into the river –
Part 1*

Question: "Pharaoh commanded his entire nation" (Shemot 1:22). "He also decreed against them" (Rashi ibid. from Sotah 12a). How could the Egyptians agree to throw their own children into the river? They would drown, if by some miracle the alligators did not rip them apart!

Answer: Some rabbis explained that Egypt pretended to be a “modern” and “progressive” state which did not want to enact a discriminatory law, and therefore all children were included within the decree. The officials appointed to carry out this plan well

"And Hashem heard our voice" as it said: "And G-d heard their groaning, and G-d remembered His covenant with Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov."

"And he saw our suffering," this refers to the separation of husband and wife, as it is said: "G-d saw the children of Israel and G-d took note."

"Our labor," this refers to the children, as it is said: "Every boy that is born, you shall throw into the river and every girl you shall keep alive."

————— Commentary —————

understood its intention, and they overlooked the non-Jewish babies. But the Master of the Universe, in His kindness, saved these Jewish babies who were thrown into the river, and the river itself brought them safely back to shore (Pirkei De-Rabbi Eliezer, chapter 42).

Every boy that is born, you shall throw into the river - Part 2

On the 20th of Iyar 5702, the Germans decreed that no more babies would be born in the Kovno Ghetto. Every child which was born would be shot together with his mother. The pregnant women panicked and the essential question was: Where could they hide a crying newborn baby when the Germans regularly visited the houses in the Ghetto? The Jews, however, did not yield. They said to themselves: We do not have sovereignty over life, and it is not our desire to destroy the Jewish Nation. We will not turn into baby killers. They therefore began to hide the babies. Not only were babies born in abundance in the Ghetto, but they were also circumcised according to the law.

It happened that there was a couple who was married for five years

וְאֵת לְחֻצְנוֹ. זֶה הַדְּחֻק. כְּמָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וְגַם-
 רָאִיתִי אֶת־הַלְּחָץ, אֲשֶׁר מִצְרַיִם
 לְחָצוּ אֹתָם:

————— Commentary —————

and did not have any children. Now, in the Ghetto of all places, after the decree, Hashem blessed them with a son. They hid in a building which was a professional school, with the thought that the noise of the machines and hammers would overpower the baby's screaming. They organized the brit milah (circumcision) there. At the moment that the mohel began his work, they suddenly heard a car stop in front of the building. The Gestapo got out. A great panic gripped everyone, and the mohel's hands began to shake. Those present had no idea what to do. How could they save the baby and the mother? Everyone shook from fear. The bravest of all of them was the mother. She turned to the mohel and said: "Hurry and circumcise the baby. You see that they are coming to kill us. The baby should at least die as a Jew!" He performed the circumcision. They waited for the murderers, but they were saved by a miracle. The Nazis did not enter to find this family, but wanted to visit the professional school. All of those present heard the words of the brave mother, and the baby was circumcised under the shadow of death (Ani Ma'amin by Mordechai Eliav, pp. 93-94).

Questions

1. Which Rabbi in the Gemara drank the four cups and had a big headache?
2. Is each of the four cups a mitzvah by itself or is all lost if one does not have enough wine for all four cups?
3. What is the acronym "yakneh'az"?
4. Were the two cooked foods (a shank bone and an egg) on the Seder plate during the time of the Gemara?

"And our oppression," this refers to the pressure, as it is said: "I have seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them."

————— Commentary —————

5. Why are there three matzot?
6. Why do we ritually wash our hands a second time in preparation for eating the matzah?
7. Why do we say the blessing of "Ha-motzi" before the blessing over the mitzvah of eating matzah?
8. Where is the one place Moshe Rabbenu is mentioned in the Haggadah?
9. Where is Aharon mentioned in the Haggadah?
10. Who baked matzah in the Book of Bereshit?

Answers: 1. Rabbi Yehudah ben Rabbi Ilai drank the four cups and had a headache from Pesach until Shavuot (Nedarim 49b). 2. Each cup is a separate mitzvah. 3. It reminds us how to act at a Seder which falls on Saturday night: Yayin – blessing over the wine, Kiddush – blessing for the holiday, Ner – blessing over the candle/light, Havdalah – blessing for after Shabbat, Zman – blessing of Shechechyanu. 4. No, some Sages put a beet and rice. This obviously is not proper for Ashkenazic Jews nowadays. 5. Two matzot for the two loaves as on every Shabbat and holiday and one representing poor people's bread. 6. Because we get involved in other things and may accidentally have touched something to make our hands impure. 7. When there are two mitzvot to perform at the same time, we perform the more frequent one first. 8. Rabbi Yosi says...and His servant Moshe. 9. In Hallel – "Beit Aharon – the House of Aharon." 10. Sarah and Lot.

And our oppression – this refers to the pressure

"When I was fourteen years old in the concentration camp of Auschwitz, one day I saw the deputy commander of the barracks walking with a thick rubber pipe in order to whip someone. I got down from my bunk so that I could see who they were going to strike. They whipped us for everything, and the number of lashes was according to the magnitude of the infraction. The use of the

וַיִּוְצְאֵנוּ יי מִמִּצְרַיִם, בְּיַד חֲזָקָה, וּבִזְרַע נְטוּיָה,
וּבְמִרְא גְדוֹל וּבְאִתּוֹת וּבְמוֹפְתִים:

וַיִּוְצְאֵנוּ יי מִמִּצְרַיִם. לֹא עַל-יְדֵי מְלָאךָ, וְלֹא
עַל-יְדֵי שָׂרָף. וְלֹא עַל-יְדֵי שְׁלִיחַ. אֶלָּא
הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא בְּכַבּוּדוֹ וּבְעֶצְמוֹ. שְׁנֵאמַר:

————— Commentary —————

rubber pipe began on that day. They usually used a staff which would break many times in the middle of the lashes; they therefore began to use the rubber pipe. I wanted to see how it worked; perhaps I would have to meet this rubber one day.

The deputy commander of the barracks approached one of the bunks. The boy who was there, around fourteen years old, already knew and was waiting for him. He commanded him: Get down! The boy came down, bent over and he began to strike him. A few of us stood there and stared at this sight. One could see a sight like this many times, but this time was a unique occurrence: The boy did not cry, he did not yell, he did not even sigh. We were amazed; we did not know what this was. We stared and counted the lashes. We counted twenty, we counted twenty-five lashes. There were usually twenty-five lashes, and here there were already thirty. All of us were astonished that this boy did not let out a sound. We never saw anything like this. After the fortieth strike, the deputy commander of the barracks turned the boy over on the ground and began to hit him on the legs and head. The boy did not sigh, he did not cry, he did not make a sound.

The soldier was enraged. He finished the fiftieth and left him. We helped him get up. He had a red mark of his forehead from one of the strikes with the rubber pipe. We asked him: 'What did you do? Why did they hit you?' He answered: 'It was worth it. I bought

"Hashem took us out of Egypt with a strong hand and an outstretched arm, and with a great manifestation, and with signs and wonders."

"Hashem took us out of Egypt," not through an angel, not through a seraph and not through a messenger. The Holy One, Blessed be He, did it in His glory by Himself!

————— Commentary —————

my friends some prayer books, so that they would have something to pray with.' He did not add anything else. He got up, climbed on to the bunk and sat down" (Testimony from the Eichmann Trial, p. 1126 and Ani Ma'amin of Mordechai Eliav, pp. 114-115).

With a strong hand

Hashem forced out those who did not want to leave Egypt, and those who unalterably loved their Exile and would not leave died during the three days of darkness. The Netziv added: "And we must also remember all of this at this time when many of Israel refuse the future Redemption, may it come speedily, but The Holy One, blessed be He, will rule over us with a strong hand" (commentary of Haggadah), as the prophet Yechezkel (20:34) said: "I will bring you out from the nations and gather you out of the lands in which you were scattered with a strong hand, outstretched arm and anger poured out." May Hashem have mercy.

With signs and wonders

It would seem that a miracle is the opposite of the "normal" order of nature. The truth is, however, that all of nature is a result of the greatest miracle of all: The Creation of the world out of nothing. "Nature" refers to the fixed laws which connect cause and effect.

וְעִבְרָתִי בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם בְּלִילָה הַזֶּה,

וְהִכִּיתִי כָּל-בְּכוֹר בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם, מֵאָדָם וְעַד בְּהֵמָה,
וּבְכָל-אֱלֹהֵי מִצְרַיִם אֶעֱשֶׂה שְׁפָטִים אֲנִי יי:

וְעִבְרָתִי בְּאֶרֶץ-מִצְרַיִם בְּלִילָה הַזֶּה, אֲנִי וְלֹא
מִלְאָךְ.

————— Commentary —————

There is order, there is causality, but the Creation is hidden within nature. "You are truly a hidden G-d" (Yeshayahu 45:15). The world is called "Olam" in Hebrew, because Hashem is hidden ("mitale^um" – the same letters as "Olam") in the worlds He created. The Master of the Universe works through nature and His infinite world is covered by a curtain. The curtain sometimes rips and we see divine sights with multitudes of shades. "Nature" is only one of the possible ways which Hashem could direct the world. Our Sages use the expression "The way of the world" (minhago shel olam), but there are other possible ways. They also refer to it as the order of Creation, but there are other possible arrangements. The unlimited is revealed in the limited. A miracle makes clear that nature is also miraculous. It is one possibility among the infinite orders of nature. Just as all of history is a hidden miracle, so too is all of nature. One poet wrote: There is something worse than a perverse soul, and that is an apathetic soul wedded to habit. One should see "For Your miracles that are with us every day...For Your wonders and favors that are at all times - night, morning and afternoon" (the prayer "Modim" in "Shemoneh Esrei").

And with wonders

This is the end of the verses of "Mikra Bikkurim" – the paragraph recited when bringing the first fruits to the Temple. Some explain that our Sages chose these verses because then everyone knew them

Thus it is said: "During that night I will pass through the land of Egypt,

"And I will smite every first born in the land of Egypt, from man to beast, and I will carry out judgments against all the gods of Egypt, I Hashem."

"I will pass through the land of Egypt," I and not an angel;

————— Commentary —————

by heart. According to the Malbim, they chose them because they are a few verses which include a lot (Haggadah, p. 13). If we have arrived at this point, we should remember the next few verses in the Torah: "He brought us to this place, and He gave us this Land, a Land flowing with milk and honey" (Devarim 26:9). The purpose of the Exodus is to arrive at the Land of Israel: "I will remove you...I will save you...I will redeem you...I will take you out...I will bring you" (Shemot 6:6-8)

I and not an angel – Part I

Question: If so, why does the Torah say: "Hashem will pass through to smite Egypt, and He will see the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, and Hashem will pass over the entrance and will not let the destroyer enter your houses to smite" (Shemot 12:23). What then is this destroyer here?

Answer: The Vilna Gaon explained: The plague of the killing of the firstborn was performed by the Master of the Universe Himself, but there were also Jews, not necessarily firstborn, who were scheduled on that very night to die a natural death by the destroyer, i.e. the angel of death. They were also saved in order not to give the Egyptians an opportunity to claim that the Children of Israel were also struck by the plague of the killing of the firstborn.

וְהִפִּיתִי כָּל בְּכוֹר בְּאֶרֶץ־מִצְרַיִם. אֲנִי וְלֹא שָׂרָף.
 וּבְכָל־אֱלֹהֵי מִצְרַיִם אֶעֱשֶׂה שְׁפָטִים, אֲנִי
 וְלֹא הַשְּׁלִיחַ. אֲנִי יי. אֲנִי הוּא וְלֹא אֲחֵר:

————— Commentary —————

I and not an angel - Part 2

Question: Why did the Master of the Universe bother to pass through all of Egypt during the killing of the firstborn instead of sending a destroying angel to perform this act as He did to strike the camp of Ashur, as it says: "An angel of Hashem went out and smote the camp of Ashur" (Melachim 2 19:35)?

Answer: Rabbi Tzadok Ha-Cohain of Lublin answered based on the Zohar (vol.1, 117a), "Because Egypt was full of the filth of idol worship, it was impossible for the holiness of the angels to enter there" (Yisrael Kedoshim, p. 46), for their holiness would be spoiled by the impurity of Egypt. Only the Master of the Universe Himself could pass through Egypt, since He is above any impurity. "And similarly, [Before entering] a bathroom, one says [to the angels that accompany him]: Honored servants of Hashem, give honor to Hashem [and leave me until I enter, perform my needs and return to you] (Berachot 60b), for their holiness cannot enter a filthy place, which is not the case with Hashem Himself, as they say in the 'Shir Ha-Yichud' (for the High Holidays), 'You will not be spoiled by any filth' (Shir Ha-Yichud for Tuesday), since there is not any impurity which can besmirch the holiness of the Blessed One (Yisrael Kedoshim ibid.).

Question: If so, how is it possible that Israel was not damaged by the impurity of Egypt, if the angels would have become impure?

Answer: The holiness of Israel is higher than the holiness of the angels. "Sanctify yourselves and you will be holy, for I am holy"

"And I will smite every first born in the land of Egypt,"
 I and not a seraph; "And I will carry out judgments
 against all the gods of Egypt," I and not a messenger; "I
 – Hashem," it is I, and none other!

————— Commentary —————

(Vayikra 11:44). Israel is connected intrinsically to the source of holiness. Israel's transgressions, however, can cause a rupture, as it says, "But your sins separate between you and your G-d" (Yeshayahu 59:2), for the revelation of Israel's inner treasure is dependent on how we choose to act. Even though it is written: "Who dwells with you in the midst of your impurity" (Vayikra 16:16 and see Yoma 57a), "in any event, everything is according to one's personal preparation" (Yisrael Kedoshim *ibid.*). But there will never be a complete severance, "And even the sinners of Israel will not be cut off from their heritage, because it is impossible to sever the entire root of Judaism. Nonetheless, the amount of holiness we have within us continues to decrease on account of the sins, and the remaining holiness of above is always based on the holiness below" (*ibid.*).

I and not a messenger

Question: Wasn't everything done by a messenger – Moshe Rabbenu?

Answer: This means that there was not a human messenger, but a divine messenger: Moshe Rabbenu, who was equal to all of Israel (Mechilta, Yitro 1, 1), "A man of G-d" (Devarim 33:1). Out of complete divine devotion, it was as if he himself acted with divine power (Rabbenu, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah, *ibid.*, p. 66). In fact, there is no praise of Moshe Rabbenu in the entire Haggadah, except for a passing mention in the verse, "And they believed in Hashem and Moshe, his servant" (Shemot 14:31) in the statement of Rabbi Yosi Ha-Galilee, and even this is not found in every version of the

בִּיד חֲזָקָה. זוּ הַדָּבָר. כְּמָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: הִנֵּה יַדַי
 הוֹיָה, בְּמִקְנֶדְךָ אֲשֶׁר בְּשָׂדֶה, בְּסוּסִים
 בְּחֹמְרִים בְּגַמְלִים, בְּבָקָר וּבִצְאֹן, דָּבָר כָּבֵד מְאֹד:

וּבְזָרַע נְטוּיָה. זוּ הַחֶרֶב. כְּמָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וַחֲרָבוּ
 שְׁלוּפָה בְּיָדוֹ, נְטוּיָה עַל־
 יְרוּשָׁלַיִם:

וּבְמִוְרָא גְדוֹל, זֶה גְלוּי שְׂכִינָה. כְּמָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר:
 אוּ הִנֵּסָה אֱלֹהִים, לְבוֹא

————— Commentary —————

Haggadah. Even though Moshe Rabbenu was the national leader and divine messenger, do not think that he did everything, as the Children of Israel stumbled and said: "Because this man Moshe, who brought us up from Egypt" (ibid. 32:1), and they did not say: "G-d who brought you up from Egypt" (Ramban). Do not think that the entire Redemption was because of the merit of Moshe Rabbenu, and if it were not for him, they would not have been redeemed. Our Sages said: "Israel was worthy to be redeemed from Egypt, even if Moshe and Aharon did not arise, as it says: 'And afterwards they will leave with great wealth' (Bereshit 15:14)...but good things are brought about through the agency of good people" (Massechet Semachot, chapter 8). So too, the Torah had to be given to the Nation of Israel, and even without Moshe and Aharon, the Master of the Universe would have found another messenger (ibid.). Rabbi Yehudah Halevy also emphasizes that without the Children of Israel, the Torah would not be in the world. The greatness of the Children of Israel is not on account of Moshe Rabbenu, but on the contrary, the greatness of Moshe Rabbenu is only on their account. We are not called the Nation of Moshe, but the Nation of Hashem (Kuzari

"With a strong hand," this refers to the pestilence, as it is said: "Behold, the hand of Hashem will be upon your livestock in the field, upon the horses, the donkeys, the camels, the herds and the flocks, a very severe pestilence."

"And with an outstretched arm," this refers to the sword, as it is said: "His sword was drawn, in his hand, stretched out over Jerusalem."

"And with a great awe," this refers to the revelation of the Divine Presence, as it is said: "Has any G-d

————— Commentary —————

2, 56). The Temple would have been built even without David and Shlomo. And the Nation would have been redeemed in the time of Haman, the evil one, even without Mordechai and Esther (Massechet Semachot *ibid.*). It is an explicit verse, "For if you continue to remain silent at a time like this, relief and salvation will come to the Jews from some other place" (Esther 4:14). And so too, on the other hand, even without Pharaoh we would have been enslaved in a different way, and we would have been exiled even without Nebuchadnezzar. But good things are brought about through the agency of good people and bad things are brought out through the agency of bad people (Massechet Semachot *ibid.*).

And with great awe – This is the revelation of the Divine Presence

Our revered teacher, Rav Kook, explained that there is a lower and a higher sense of awe. The lower one is fear of punishment, the higher one is nullifying one's existence before the Divine. Nullifying one's being before another person is slavery, but nullifying oneself

לְקַחַת לּוֹ גּוֹי מִקֶּרֶב גּוֹי, בְּמִסַּת בְּאֶתֶת וּבְמוֹפְתִים
 וּבְמַלְחָמָה, וּבִיד חֲזָקָה וּבִזְרוּעַ נְטוּיָה, וּבְמוֹרָאִים גְּדֹלִים.
 כָּכֵל אֲשֶׁר-עָשָׂה לָכֶם יי אֱלֹהֵיכֶם בְּמִצְרָיִם, לְעִינֵיךָ:

וּבְאֶתֶת. זֶה הַמַּטָּה, כְּמָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וְאֵת הַמַּטָּה
 הַזֶּה תִּקַּח בְּיָדְךָ. אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשֶׂה-בּוֹ אֶת-
 הָאֶתֶת:

וּבְמוֹפְתִים. זֶה הַדָּם. כְּמָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וְנִתְּנִי
 מוֹפְתִים, בְּשָׁמַיִם וּבָאָרֶץ

דָּם. וְאֵשׁ. וְתִימְרוֹת עֵשֶׂן:

————— Commentary —————

before the Master of the Universe is the highest level of existence. Great awe, supreme awe, is therefore revelation of the Divine Presence. This silence is richer than any human speech (Orot Ha-Kodesh vol. 3, p. 273).

Removing drops of wine

When saying the plagues, we remove drops of wine from the cups – sixteen in all (Rama, Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 473:7). This custom is already mentioned by the Rishonim (early authorities). The reason is that the plagues did not injure us, since Hashem saved us from all of them, and they came upon our enemies. Some have

ever tried to take for himself a nation from the midst of another nation, with trials, signs and wonders, with war and with a strong hand and an outstretched arm, and with great awe, like all that Hashem your G-d did for you in Egypt before your eyes?!"

"And with signs," this refers to the staff, as it is said:
"Take into your hand this staff with which you shall perform the signs."

"And wonders," this refers to the blood, as it is said:
"And I shall show wonders in heaven and on earth."

As each of the following words is recited, a drop of wine should be spilled from the cup. The same is done when each of the Ten Plagues is mentioned and when Rabbi Yehuda's three acronyms are recited. When the wine used contains the holiness of the Shemittah year – the seventh year – we do not remove it from our cups (Olat Re'eyah vol. 2, p. 280):

Blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke.

————— Commentary —————

the custom to remove the wine with their finger to hint at the words of the sorcerers of Egypt, "It is the finger of G-d" (Shemot 8:15). There are those who remove the wine with their ring finger, and the Arizal said that one should pour from the cup. Rabbi Yitzchak Abarbanel said that the reason for taking out the drops is to limit our joy, because the Egyptians were punished and drowned in the sea. This was strict justice because of their evil deeds, nonetheless "When your enemy falls, do not rejoice" (Mishlei 24:17).

דָּבָר אַחֵר. בְּיַד חֲזָקָה שְׁתֵּימָּס. וּבְזֶרַע נְטוּיָה שְׁתֵּימָּס.
 וּבְמוֹרָא גָּדוֹל שְׁתֵּימָּס. וּבְאֲתוֹת שְׁתֵּימָּס. וּבְמִפְתֵּימָּס
 שְׁתֵּימָּס:

אֱלוֹ עֶשֶׂר מִכּוֹת שֶׁהֵבִיא הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא עַל־
 הַמִּצְוִיִּים בְּמִצְוִיִּים, וְאֱלוֹ הוּא:

דָּם, צַפְרִידַע, פְּנִים, עָרוֹב, דָּבָר,
 שְׁחִין, בְּרָד, אֲרָבָה, חֲשָׁד, מִפֶּת
 בְּכוֹרוֹת:

————— Commentary —————

The Ten Plagues – Part 1

Question: Couldn't Hashem have redeemed the Nation of Israel with one plague?

Answer: Of course! Our Sages already asked: Why was the world created with ten utterances? Couldn't Hashem have created it with one utterance (Avot 5:1)? Our world is not an expression of the divine ability to act at a single moment, but to act in stages. The Ramchal – Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzato - wrote that each day the world gets closer to its perfection. All the worlds that were created previously were done piecemeal, but they all could be exalted. Our world was not created with the full power of the Master of the Universe. Hashem limited His power and revealed Himself in the way in which humans work: little by little, according to a divine plan which continues to be actualized over time. It is not true that the Master of the Universe needed to bring plague after plague because of the stubbornness of Pharaoh's heart. On the contrary, the Blessed

Another explanation: "Strong hand" indicates two [plagues]; "Outstretched arm," another two; "Great manifestation," another two; "Signs," another two; and "Wonders," another two.

These are the Ten Plagues which the Holy One, Blessed be He, brought upon the Egyptians, and they are:

Blood. Frogs. Lice. Wild Beasts.
 Pestilence. Boils. Hail. Locust.
 Darkness. Slaying of the First born.

————— Commentary —————

One caused the stubbornness of his heart in order to bring the plagues upon him. "For I have made his heart and the heart of his servants heavy so that I can put My signs in his midst, and so that you may relate in the ears of your son and your grandson" (Shemot 10:1-2). In our days as well, do not despair for the Redemption which is progressing slowly, slowly. This is not divine weakness – G-d forbid, but the greatest strength for the sake of increasing sanctification of Hashem's Name.

The Ten Plagues – Part 2

Our Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah, explained that Hashem often directs the world through the number ten: "Avraham Avinu was tested with ten trials, and he withstood them all" (Avot 5:3). The same holiness of ten continues in the offspring of Avraham, "Ten miracles were performed for our ancestors in Egypt" (ibid. 5:4). Corresponding to each of the plagues which occurred to Egypt was a miracle which was performed for Israel (Maharal, Derech Chaim

————— Commentary —————

ibid.), "And there was thick darkness throughout the land of Egypt...but for the Children of Israel there was light in their dwellings" (Shemot 10:22-23). The plagues and the miracles are two sides of the same phenomenon: The negative and the positive. And there is a continuation in the desert: "With ten trials did our ancestors test The Holy One, blessed be He, in the desert" (ibid. 5:4), which are also the revealed divine order. And all of this was a preparation for "the foundation of Your dwelling-place that You, Hashem, have made. The Temple, Hashem, that Your hands established" (Shemot 15:17): "Ten miracles were performed for our ancestors in the Temple" (Avot 5:5 and Sichot Rabbenu, Bereshit pp. 84-85).

Blood

Question: "The sorcerers of Egypt did the same by means of incantations, and Pharaoh's heart was strong and he did not listen to them, as Hashem had spoken" (Shemot 7:22). Why did Hashem choose to bring plagues which the sorcerers knew how to perform?

Answer: Some explain that this is exactly how Hashem hardened Pharaoh's heart by giving him the chance to think that Hashem did not perform this act, and that Moshe Rabbenu was a sorcerer. In this way, he truly did not take away his free choice. Similarly, the fact that each plague ended after a specific time was in order to provide Pharaoh with the opportunity to err as to whether it was the result of sorcery or a natural phenomenon which ceased. Thus, Pharaoh was given free choice, and Hashem hardened his heart. This is like the opinion of Rabbi Yosef Albo in Sefer Ha-Ikarim, that hardening Pharaoh's heart was providing him with the opportunity to err. And Rabbi Yitzchak of Volozhin explained homiletically: The wonder of drowning humanity in a valley of blood, non-Jewish magicians always knew how to perform this.

————— Commentary —————

Frogs

Chananyah, Misha'el and Azaryah (whom Nebuchadnezzar threatened to throw into a fiery furnace if they did not bow down to an idol) were in doubt about the law of self-sacrifice for the sanctification of Hashem's Name, as it was new to them. They learned the answer from the frogs: "The frogs were not commanded concerning sanctifying Hashem's Name, and it is written about them, "And they shall go up into your house....your ovens and into your kneading troughs" (Shemot 7:28). When are the kneading troughs found by the oven? When the oven is hot - All the more so we, who are commanded concerning sanctifying Hashem's Name [are required to display self-sacrifice] (Pesachim 53b). And in the end, a miracle occurred for those frogs which jumped into the oven, as it is written, "And the frogs died – from the houses, the courtyards and the fields" (Shemot 8:9), and it does not say "and from the ovens" (see Ba'al Ha-Turim, Torah Sheleimah, Shemot 8:25).

The Jewish community of Pinshov was one of the most important communities in Poland; a city full of sages, writers, businessmen, men of renown and great Torah scholars. They had the day for business, and the night for Torah study. Every single weekday night, when their business was completed in the city streets and the stores were closed, almost everyone gathered in the house of study. There, along long tables and open books, the elderly and young would sit together, everyone involved in learning Torah, arguing and butting heads in Halachah. This one asking, and that one answering. This one raising a problem, and that one offering a resolution. The illumination in Torah gave their hearts joy and pleasure, and they would forget their daily concerns and troubles.

It happened one evening that one of the sages stood up and asked: It is a refutable argument, since Hashem said to Moshe, "And they shall go" (Shemot 7:28), the frogs were therefore commanded to do

————— Commentary —————

so, then why do our Sages in the Gemara in Pesachim (above) say that they were not commanded? The Torah scholars began to argue about this question, and did not find a solution. Among those present was an eight year old boy who excelled in learning Gemara. Even though the hour was late, close to midnight, since he was one of the regulars in the house of study, he heard the discussion, jumped up and said: While it is true that the frogs were commanded, "And they shall go" (ibid.), each frog could have said to another frog: Go into the burning oven, and I will enter the house, room or bed, since the commandment was general and not specific. Nonetheless, every frog, even though it was not directly ordered to enter the fire, desired to sanctify Hashem's Name and jump into the burning oven – Thus, the Sages' explanation fits nicely (Sefer Ha-Gra of Rav Y.L. Maimon, pp. 12-13).

It does not take great wisdom to volunteer another to sacrifice himself. The highest level is to offer to sacrifice oneself. "Rabbi Meir would say: When Israel was standing at the sea, the tribes were arguing with one another. This one said: I am entering the sea first, and another said: I am entering the sea first...Rabbi Yehudah said to him: This is not how it happened, rather this one said: I am not entering the sea first, and another said: I am not entering the sea first. Nachshon ben Aminadav jumped up and entered the sea" (Sotah 36-37). Ha-Gaon Rabbi Yehoshua of Kutna explained homiletically that there is no dispute. Rabbi Meir said that everyone said: I am entering first. Rabbi Yehudah added that although everyone boasted in this way, it is not how it happened. When the time arrived to act, everyone evaded going in first until Nachshon jumped into the sea.

Lice – Part 1

"The sorcerers said to Pharaoh: It is the finger of G-d" (Shemot 8:15). We find the word "finger" three times in the Tanach: 1. In relation to the stars representing enormity, "When I see your heavens,

 Commentary

the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You made" (Tehillim 8:4). 2. In relation to the tablets of the Ten Commandments which represent spiritual heights, "Inscribed by the finger of G-d" (Shemot 31:18). 3. In relation to the lice which represent minutia. This is to teach you that everything is one and equal within Hashem's ability (Rabbi Sa'adia Gaon, Torah Sheleimah, Shemot 8:50 with note). Our revered teacher Rav Kook, wrote: "Along with 'How great are Your acts, Hashem' (Tehillim 104:24 and prayer 'Yotzer Or' in the morning prayer), it is proper to say with great astonishment 'How minute are Your acts, Hashem.' This means that just as we are full of wonder at the greatness of the luminaries, wide expanses of the heavens, and the mighty powers of nature, we are also amazed in our observation of the depth of creation in its minutia, in the smallest details of the limbs of animals, and the fineness of materials and the precision of the powers in the farthest places." Similarly, the most abstract, supreme thoughts are together with the details of the halachot and precision of hair-splitting argumentation (Orot Ha-Torah 3:8).

Lice - Part 2

Question: Why were the sorcerers of Egypt unsuccessful in duplicating this plague?

Answer: Our Rabbis said: "If all of the people of the world gathered to create one mosquito and place a soul into it, they would be unable" (Jerusalem Talmud, Sanhedrin 7:13 and Bereshit Rabbah 39:21). Scientific scholars can blend existing material, break them down into their component parts and create changes within them. The sorcerers could similarly take existing component parts and move them with their sorcery, but they could not reign over something the size of a lentil, or create something from nothing, or create something organic from something inorganic (see Le-Netivot Yisrael of our Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah, vol. 2, p. 119).

רַבִּי יְהוּדָה הִיא נֹתֵן בָּהֶם סַמָּנִים:

דַּצ"ד עַד"ש בַּאח"ב:

רַבִּי יוֹסִי הַגְּלִילִי אֹמֵר: מִנִּין אַתָּה אֹמֵר,
שֶׁלְקוּ הַמִּצְרִים בְּמִצְרַיִם
עֲשֵׂר מִכּוֹת, וְעַל הַיָּם, לָקוּ חֲמִשִּׁים מִכּוֹת? בְּמִצְרַיִם
מָה הוּא אֹמֵר: וַיֹּאמְרוּ הַחֲרֻטָּמִּים אֶל־פְּרָעָה, אֲצַבֵּעַ
אֱלֹהִים הוּא. וְעַל הַיָּם מָה הוּא אֹמֵר? וַיֵּרָא יִשְׂרָאֵל
אֶת־הַיָּד הַגְּדֹלָה, אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה יְיָ בְּמִצְרַיִם, וַיֵּירָאוּ הָעָם
אֶת־יְיָ. וַיֹּאמְרוּ בְּיָדֵינוּ, וּבְמִשְׁחָה עֲבָדוֹ. כִּמָּה לָקוּ בְּאֲצַבַּע,

————— Commentary —————

Wild Beasts

Measure-for-measure: You act like wild animals towards people, and now you will feel this in your bodies (Ha-Rav Shimshon Rafael Hirsch).

And they believed in Hashem and Moshe, His servant

Do not think that a miracle will necessarily lead to faith. On the contrary, one first needs faith in order to see the miracle within an occurrence. Our revered teacher, Rav Kook, said that if a heretic would have been present at the Creation of the world, he still would have remained a heretic and would have given a rational explanation for everything. The Rambam emphasized that the impression made by a miracle is ineffectual and fleeting: "Israel did not believe Moshe Rabbenu based on the signs he performed. One who believes based on a sign has a doubt in his heart, since it is possible to perform a sign through magic or sorcery...and why did they believe him? Standing at Mt. Sinai when our eyes saw and not another's, and

Rabbi Yehudah referred to them by acronyms: DeTzaCh (blood, frogs, lice) ADaSh (beasts, pestilence, boils) BeAChaV (hail, locust, darkness, first born).

One should fill their wine cup up from the missing drops (Olat Re'eyah vol. 2, p. 280)

Rabbi Yosi Ha-Gelili said: How do you know that the Egyptians were struck by ten plagues in Egypt, and then by fifty plagues at the sea? In Egypt it says of them, "The magicians said to Pharaoh: This is the finger of G-d." At the sea it says: "Israel saw the great hand that Hashem laid against Egypt; and the people feared Hashem, and they believed in Hashem and Moshe, His servant."

————— Commentary —————

our ears heard and not another's...and where do we learn this?...As it says, 'Behold, I come to you in the thickness of the cloud, so that the Nation will hear that I speak to you, and they will also believe in you forever' (Shemot 19:9). This implies that preceding this occurrence, they did not believe with a trust that is everlasting, but a trust which is preceded by doubts and contemplations" (Hilchot Yesodei Ha-Torah – Laws of the Foundations of Torah 8:1). Faith precedes everything. One who believes sees the “hand” of Hashem acting in a miracle, and even sees the “hand” of Hashem acting in nature and history.

And they believed in Hashem

Our Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah, wrote on this verse (Shemot 14:31) that Klal Yisrael (the entirety of Israel) from Avraham Avinu onward are believers (Sichot Rabbenu – Vayikra, p. 186, 242). The source for this idea is the words of our Sages in the Gemara in Shabbat (97a) that when Moshe Rabbenu said: They will not believe

עֲשׂוּר מִכּוֹת: אָמֹר מֵעַתָּה, בְּמִצְרַיִם לָקוּ עֲשׂוּר מִכּוֹת,
וְעַל־הֵי, לָקוּ חֲמִשִּׁים מִכּוֹת:

————— Commentary —————

me (Shemot 4:1), Hashem said to him: They are believers, the children of believers. They are believers, as it is written: "The Nation believed" (ibid. 31), and the children of believers: "And he [Avraham] believed in Hashem" (Bereshit 15:6). Faith in Hashem is a trait of Israel.

And Moshe, His servant

This is the only mention of Moshe Rabbenu in the Haggadah, and it is only in passing. Furthermore, the Haggadah says: "And Hashem brought us out of Egypt" (Devarim 26:8) – not through an angel, nor through a saraf nor through a messenger, but The Holy One, blessed be He, in His honor, Himself." This is surprising since Moshe Rabbenu displayed incredible self-sacrifice to save the Nation of Israel. Only a hint of Moshe Rabbenu is found "Malach" (angel), "Saraf" (different type of angel) and "Ha-shali'ach" (messenger) – the acronym of the name "Moshe."

The Vilna Gaon explained that the Master of the Universe performed the Exodus, and He did not take a person, as great as he would be, to be the central part of the redemption. "Not through an angel, nor through a saraf, nor through a messenger." He wrote that while Moshe Rabbenu was a messenger, the Exodus was performed corresponding to three worlds: "Shali'ach" is the world of making, "malach" is the world of forming and "saraf" is the world of creation. The essence of the redemption was not performed through only one of these three, but through all of them. Hashem did not send or command Moshe Rabbenu to do anything at the time of the redemption, but all of Israel together performed the mitzvot of

How many plagues did they suffer with a "finger"? Ten plagues. Thus you must conclude that in Egypt they were smitten by ten plagues, and at the sea they were smitten by fifty plagues.

————— Commentary —————

Hashem: The Pesach sacrifice, matzah and maror (Haggadah of the Vilna Gaon).

How could the Vilna Gaon say that Hashem did not send or command Moshe Rabbenu? We have explicit verses that Hashem did send him! He meant that this was not an independent labor of Moshe Rabbenu, but part of a divine action. Moshe was only a vessel, like a hand writing with a pen. This is therefore the only time it is written: "And they believed in Hashem and Moshe, His servant." There are not two different beliefs here, belief in Hashem and belief in a human, but Moshe Rabbenu is the servant of Hashem and does not function on his own.

The Vilna Gaon continued that everything which occurred was for Hashem's honor alone, as the Haggadah says: "His honor, Himself." Hashem includes His own power and strength within His creatures and what they do is called "His strength." Since they do not possess an independent power, they reveal Hashem's power. The Holy One, blessed be He, gives life to all creatures and all of their actions. The Rambam began the Mishneh Torah: "The foundation of foundations and the pillar of wisdoms: To know that there is an Existence there that preceded [all]. He creates everything which exists, and everything which exists from the heavens and the earth and what is in between, only exists from the axiom of His existence (Hilchot Yesodei Ha-Torah – Laws of the Foundations of Torah 1:1. And see Nefesh Ha-Chaim, gate 3 and Sefer Ha-Tanya, Sha'ar Ha-Yichud and Ha-Emunah). This is the truth, but people do not believe it. They mistakenly believe that they have an independent power and explain everything as occurring "naturally."

רַבִּי אֱלִיעֶזֶר אָמַר: מִנֵּין שְׁכַל־מִכָּה וּמִכָּה,
 שֶׁהֵבִיא הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא עַל
 הַמִּצְוֹת בְּמִצְוֹתָיִם, הִיְתָה שֶׁל אַרְבַּע מִכּוֹת? שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר:
 יִשְׁלַח־בָּם חֲרוֹן אַפּוֹ, עֲבָרָה וְזַעַם וְצָרָה. מִשְׁלַחַת
 מִלְאָכֵי רָעִים. עֲבָרָה אַחַת. וְזַעַם שְׁתַּיִם. וְצָרָה שְׁלֹשׁ.
 מִשְׁלַחַת מִלְאָכֵי רָעִים אַרְבַּע: אָמֹר מַעֲתָהּ, בְּמִצְוֹתָיִם
 לָקוּ אַרְבָּעִים מִכּוֹת, וְעַל הַיָּם לָקוּ מֵאַתְיִם מִכּוֹת:

————— Commentary —————

The great labor was performed by Moshe Rabbenu, but he was the most humble of all people and completely nullified himself in order to make clear that everything emanates from Hashem. This does not mean that he did not serve as an agent of Hashem, but the agent teaches that he is only a servant and "Everything is His and not ours" (Kuzari 2, 50).

Moshe Rabbenu did not take any honor for himself, G-d forbid, but lowered himself to reveal that everything was according to the word of Hashem alone and for the sake of Israel. We therefore do not find even a trace of Moshe Rabbenu in the story of the Exodus, since it is forbidden for us to connect anything to His honor, as it says, "Anyone who joins the Name of Heaven and something else is uprooted from the world" (Succah 45b).

The Vilna Gaon concluded that it is written "And they believed in Hashem and Moshe, his servant" not in order to elevate Moshe, but to show his humility and the faith of Israel. They believed that Hashem performed everything and Moshe was only His servant, like all other creatures in the world, who are obligated to perform His will. Therefore, "Then Moshe and the Children of Israel will sing" – everyone together, for everyone was equal in the miracle. This is "His honor, Himself," because all honors and strength are really His.

Rabbi Eliezer said: How do we know that each individual plague which the Holy One, Blessed be He, brought upon the Egyptians in Egypt consisted of four plagues? For it is said: "He sent against them His fierce anger, fury, and indignation, and trouble, a discharge of messengers of evil." "Fury," is one; "Indignation," makes two; "Trouble," makes three; "Discharge of messengers of evil," makes four. Thus you must now say that in Egypt they were struck by forty plagues, and at the sea they were struck by two hundred plagues.

————— Commentary —————

This is the essence of our faith. The praise of Moshe – who is Moshe, our Rabbi, who gave us the Torah – is that his spirit was lower than one stricken with boils, as it says in the Midrash (Avot De-Rabbi Natan 9:2 and see Musar Avicha, 2, 5, p. 50).

At the sea – Part 1

Question: Why didn't Moshe Rabbenu enter the Red Sea first, but waited until Nachshon ben Aminadav displayed self-sacrifice and jumped in?

Answer: Moshe Rabbenu was filled with self-sacrifice and even risked his life to kill the Egyptian. Nonetheless, he was commanded by Hashem: "Speak to the Children of Israel and let them travel" (Shemot 14:15). Hashem decided that the time had come for the Children of Israel to display self-sacrifice, since they obviously did not know that the sea would split, and in this merit a miracle would occur for them. Our Sages say that when Hashem saw them at Sinai, they became upright; when He gave them the Torah..., when He saw them when He entered the Tent of Meeting, they became righteous...And when He saw them at the sea, they became roses (Midrash Tehillim 69 brought in Olat Re'eiyah vol. 2, p. 435). What

————— Commentary —————

is the meaning of roses? "Like a rose among thorns, so is my love among the daughters" (Shir Ha-Shirim 2:2). The community of Israel is compared to a rose. By displaying self-sacrifice, Israel's intrinsic nature was revealed so that a maidservant (present at the parting of the sea) saw what Yechezkel ben Buzi and all of the prophets did not see (Mechilta, Beshalach 2). How so? Prophecy only comes through the highest degree of wisdom and many other exalted, spiritual characteristics, but self-sacrifice is more important than all of these. There is in fact a connection between self-sacrifice and miracles. The Sages of the Gemara were surprised that when they fasted on Mondays and Thursdays, it did not rain, while the previous generation of Rabbi Yehudah would begin to fast by removing their shoes and it would already begin to rain. It was because the earlier generation displayed self-sacrifice. A story is told about how a Torah scholar displayed self-sacrifice, and more precisely, did so with his money (Berachot 20a), and sometimes this is more difficult, as our Sages teach "Love Hashem...with all of your might" – "with all of your money" (ibid. 54a). While Nachshon jumped in first, all of the Children of Israel followed him and displayed self-sacrifice, and they therefore merited a miracle. But the Gemara relates that Rabbi Pinchas ben Yair once went to redeem captives, and a river, which was in his way, split for him and his two escorts (Chullin 7a). What then is so great about the splitting of the Red Sea? The Chassidic Rebbe of Gur answers: The miracle was performed there for a supremely righteous person, but here it was performed for six hundred thousand men, including righteous, intermediate and wicked men, and even Michah with his idol! Nonetheless, they all displayed self-sacrifice.

At the sea - Part 2

A humorous understanding: It is well-known that there were four different groups among the Nation of Israel at the shores of the Red

 Commentary

Sea. Those who said: Let's return to Egypt. Those who said: Let's fight. Those who said: Let's pray. And those who said: Let's jump into the sea (Mechilta, Shemot 14:13). This is similar to our own time in relation to the difficulties in the Land of Israel. Those who say: Let's return parts of Israel to Egypt and the Arabs – this is the extreme left. Those who say: Let's fight against all of the Arabs – this is the extreme right. Those who say: Let's pray – this is the Charedi community (Ultra-Orthodox). And those who say: Let's jump into the sea and display self-sacrifice for the Land of Israel – these are the faithful of the Land of Israel, and regarding them it says: "Stand firm and see the salvation of Hashem" (Shemot *ibid.*).

At the sea - Part 3

Question: Where did the splitting of the sea occur?

Answer: It is difficult to specify the site of the sea, where Mt. Sinai is, and exactly where the Children of Israel traveled. The beginning of the journey was certainly in the land of Goshen and the end was in Yericho. In any event, they traveled along the length of the shore of the sea. "G-d did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, because it was near, for G-d said, 'Perhaps the people will reconsider when they see a war, and they will return to Egypt'" (Shemot 13:17). The path of the shore of the sea, from Suez to Gaza, had many traps, like "Migdol" and "Ba'al Tzefon" (*ibid.* 14:2). The Nation of Israel would clash with their enemies, and they therefore traveled on an unusual path. Thus, Pharaoh said: "They are imprisoned in the land and the Wilderness has locked them in." Regarding the location of this sea, there are two opinions among researchers. The southern school of thought claims that the sea is what is called "The Red Sea" in Greek and other European languages, because it has plants and grasses which give it this shade or because it is close to the land of Edom (which also means "red"). This sea is an offshoot of the Indian Ocean, which is narrow and

רַבִּי עֲקִיבָא אָמַר: מִנֵּין שְׁפָל־מִכָּה וּמִכָּה, שְׁהִיבִיא הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא עַל

————— Commentary —————

long and has two gulfs which fork at the Gulf of Suez and the Gulf of Eilat (Aqaba), and encloses half of the Sinai Peninsula. According to this interpretation, we can understand the verse which deals with the borders of the Land: "I will set your border from the 'Red Sea' to the Sea of the Philistines," which is the western border, "and from the Wilderness to the River," referring to the Euphrates River, which is the eastern border. This is also implied by a verse in the Book of Melachim: "And King Shlomo made a ship in Etzyon Geber, which is beside Eilat, on the shore of the 'Red Sea' in the land of Edom" (Melachim 1 9:26). This is also the opinion of Josephus. According to this, the splitting of the Sea occurred in the area of the large, bitter seas which are a northern continuation of the same southwestern offshoot, and they were connected until the Suez during that period. Our Rabbis also mention that the Sea was connected to the Nile River (Shemot Rabbah 1:21). Pharaoh dug, Darius completed it, the Arabs filled it in and Lasplas of France opened it again. There are various difficulties with this opinion: There is no eastern wind there all night, there is no tranquility in central Sinai and there are no reeds – since the waters are bitter – to justify the name "Yam Suf" which literally means the "Sea of Reeds."

The northern school of thought suggests a different possibility. They claim that the spot was on one of the shallow lagoons on the Shore of the Mediterranean Sea, at a place called the Sirbonic Lake, which has a length of seventy-eight kilometers and a width of twenty kilometers. The two dry "tongues" stretch out on two sides in the form of a bow with a two kilometer width and enter into the Mediterranean. The locust were hurled there by a western wind, "And hurled it towards the 'Reed Sea'" (Shemot 10:19). This is located across from fortresses, like Migdol and Ba'al Tzefon. This is

Rabbi Akiva said: How do we know that each individual plague which the Holy One, Blessed be He,

————— Commentary —————

also close to the land of Goshen, because the Children of Israel – which was a Nation with elderly, women and children – certainly could not travel too far. They would not have been able to travel more than five kilometers a day. According to this opinion, the Sea did not split from one side to the other, but returned to its side. Rabbi Avraham ibn Ezra writes: "Do not think that since the Torah says "into the sea" that they went half-way into the Sea. Even if they went only half a Persian mile (two kilometers) into the Sea, it is called "into the Sea" (Shemot 14:22). The Chizkuni also writes that the Children of Israel did not pass through the entire width of the Sea, but only went into a part in which Pharaoh would follow after them and drown. He says that they went into a "half-circle" (ibid.). The Rambam also writes that they went into a part, "similar to a circular bow," and a picture of this bow is included in his commentary to Mishnah Avot (5:4). The Gemara in Arachin (15a) also says: "Israel was rebelling at that moment and saying: Just as we go on this side, the Egyptians will go on the other side. The Tosafot ask, how could Israel of that generation be of such little faith to think that Hashem would perform a miracle like that, bringing them to the Land of Israel, while leaving the Egyptians to attack them again? They answer that Israel did not pass through the entire width of the Sea, but through one strip along the length of the Sea, like a circular threshing floor, and a picture appears there" (ibid.).

It is obvious that we should not conclude from all of this discussion that no miracle occurred and it was simply a low tide followed by a high tide. Rabbi Avraham ibn Ezra already harshly responded to Chavi Ha-Balchi (a heretic during the days of Rav Sa'adia Gaon), who he reproached by referring to him as Chavi Ha-Calbi (he transposed the letters of his name to read "Chavi, the dog"): "May

הַמִּצְרִים בְּמִצְרַיִם, הִיָּתָה שֶׁל חֲמֵשׁ מִכּוֹת? שְׁנֵי־אֵמֶר:
 יִשְׁלַח־בָּם חֲרוֹן אַפּוֹ, עֲבָרָה וְזַעַם וְצָרָה. מִשְׁלַחַת

————— Commentary —————

the bones of Chavi Ha-Calbi be grounded, who said that Moshe knew the time that the Sea contracted, when it receded, and the time that the Sea expanded, when it rose, in its continual movement, and that he passed through it when the water contracted, as is its usual way, and Pharaoh did not know the pattern of the Sea and therefore drowned. These are insane words, since the contraction of the sea does not dry out a place and leave walls of water from its right and left, since everything is dry. Further, it does not make sense that the end of the contraction and the beginning of its expansion is only a few hours. Furthermore, Israel would not have finished passing through before Pharaoh and his army drowned" (Rabbi Avraham ibn Ezra to Shemot 14:27). It is also difficult to explain that the Egyptians did not know this when they had temples which faced the Sea. This was certainly an unnatural miracle, a miracle of miracles! It is interesting that our Sages also describe how the Great Sea (according to this, the Mediterranean) burst into the Red Sea: "Deep waters covered them" (Shemot 5:5). Are there deep waters there? Is it not hard, dry ground? Why then does the Torah say "Deep waters covered them"? The lower depth rose to the higher depth and the waters fought with them with all types of afflictions." "They descended into the depths" (ibid.). Are there depths there? Is it not hard, dry ground? This teaches that the Great Sea burst into it and the waters fought with them with all types of afflictions. It therefore says "They descended into the depths" (Mechilta Beshalach, Mesechta De-Shirata, parashah 5).

At the sea - Part 4

Our Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah, taught that there were three miracles here:

brought upon the Egyptians in Egypt consisted of five plagues? For it is said: "He sent against them his fierce anger, fury, and indignation, and trouble, a discharge of

————— Commentary —————

a. First of all, "Hashem said to Moshe...stretch your hand out over the sea and split it" (Shemot 14:16-17). Through this act, the sea was removed from before them and fled. It does not say that it turned into steam or something else or disappeared. It remained water, but it was pushed to the side. The liquid received a divine order to stand to the side.

b. The water received a new reality and became a solid. "The water was a wall on their right and their left" (ibid. 22, 29). This was a renewal of the form of its creation. It is nature appearing in a new form.

c. "And toward morning the water returned to its power (meaning 'its natural state')" (ibid. 27). Each and every drop of water returned to its place.

Thus, the fundamental order of the miracle is clarified. At first, it appeared as a negation, a removal. Through this, a new form was revealed. In the end, it became clear that everything was one, "Hashem is one and His Name is one" (Zechariah 14:9). Nature returned to its original state. A miracle is not the destruction of nature, but the foundation, the soul of nature. "Hashem is my miracle" (Shemot 17:16). What is hidden within nature is revealed through a miracle (Sichot Rabbenu – Bereshit, pp. 226-27 and Shemot, pp. 165-167).

At the sea - Part 5

A heretic asked the Ba'al Shem Tov: Since according to the wisdom inherent in nature, the Red Sea could have split at the moment

מִלְאֲכֵי רָעִים. חֲרוֹן אַפּוֹ אַחַת. עֶבְרָה שְׁתֵּים. וְזַעַם
שָׁלַשׁ. וְצָרָה אַרְבַּע. מִשְׁלַחַת מִלְאֲכֵי רָעִים חֲמִשׁ:

————— Commentary —————

Israel entered, was it therefore a miracle? He responded: This was an even greater miracle, because The Holy One, blessed be He, put in during the Creation of the world that the Red Sea would split when Israel passed through it (Sefer Bat Yaakov brought in the Haggadah Sheleimah, additions to Beshalach, pp. 342-343).

The question is not clear. It seems like the questioner was discussing low and high tide, while the answer was referring to the words of our Sages on the verse "And toward morning the water returned to its power" (Shemot 14:27): "Do not read the word as 'to its power' (le-aitano), but as 'to its condition' (le-tena'o) – The Holy One, blessed be He, made a condition with the sea that it would split for Israel" (Mechilta De-Rashbi and Bereshit Rabbah 5:4). The Rambam also wrote that Hashem established the change of nature, and the change was also Hashem's will (Moreh Nevuchim 2, 29). Rabbenu Bachya also wrote that there is no change from the time of Creation, and that Hashem placed certain occurrences within nature. He further explained that when our Sages use the term "they were created" for events which occurred after the Creation of the world, their intention was that Hashem had an original desire which was never changed, but to the eye of the beholder there was a change in nature. This nature which comes into being because of this original desire is referred to as "created" (Rabbenu Bachya ibid. The Maharal of Prague had a different understanding (in Derech Chaim on Avot 5:7) on the ten things created at twilight at the end of Creation). This also appears in the Zohar: At the time when Israel approached the sea, The Holy One, blessed be He, called to the angel appointed over the laws of the nature of the sea. He said to him: At the time that I made the world, I appointed you over the sea, and I have a condition with the sea that its waters will split before My children.

messengers of evil." "His fierce anger," is one; "fury," makes two; "indignation," makes three; "trouble," makes four; "discharge of messengers of evil," makes five. Thus you

————— Commentary —————

The time has now come for My children to pass through the sea (Zohar Chadash 2, 49 brought in Torah Sheleimah, Shemot 14:27).

But as we said, the question is not clear, since the idea of low and high tide does not fit with the splitting of the Red Sea. There were some sages who wanted to explain the splitting of the Red Sea by natural causes, i.e. Israel entered the sea during its contraction and the Egyptians entered during its expansion. But it is impossible to make such a claim because with everything that I read about this idea I have never heard that water completely disappears during low tide. The whole process of the waters contracting also takes about twelve hours. Furthermore, even if this were true, wouldn't the Egyptian sages have known that the waters return to full strength after low tide? Why would they enter the water? And when they saw the sea raging and the waves returning, why didn't they turn around and save themselves? This is illogical.

Sometimes an earthquake occurs underwater in a place where the water is not deep. When Israel passed through, they found a closed section with air under the water, and then the water returned to its place when Egypt passed through. The Ba'al Shem Tov responded that this was an even greater miracle because this occurred at the exact moment when Israel left the sea. Moshe prophesied from the beginning that this would occur; all of the verses testify that both Israel and Egypt saw the great hand of Hashem, and this miracle was the greatest of all of the miracles that Hashem performed. Furthermore, if these were usual events in those places, that generation who saw wonders of nature in the desert would certainly have known.

In any event, we must understand that violating the laws of probability and statistics is no less of a miracle than violating any

אָמֹר מֵעַתָּה, בְּמִצְרַיִם לָקוּ חַמְשֵׁים מַכּוֹת, וְעַל הַיָּם
לָקוּ חַמְשֵׁים וּמְאַתַּיִם מַכּוֹת:

————— Commentary —————

other physical law. The laws of statistics are based on the iron-clad principles of mathematics. In general, many of the laws of physics are based on statistics, such as the second law of thermodynamics, that entropy in nature increases. This means that if it were not for the order within this system, heat would always flow from a warmer to a cooler place. Similarly, the shaking particles in any material move in a random manner as a current, gas or liquid. For example, molecules of water flow in every direction. If they all moved in one direction, the contents of a cup would all pour out on their own. And this is all also a miracle.

Two hundred and fifty plagues

There is a dispute between the Ralbag (Rabbi Levi ben Gershom) and the Maharal of Prague (Rabbi Yehudah Loew) regarding the subject of miracles. The question revolves around why Hashem has a need for miracles. Can't Hashem perform His will without miracles, i.e. take Israel out of Egypt without miracles? The Ralbag held that a miracle is performed on account of a lack of faith of weak souls in order to make an impression on them and strengthen their faith. According to this position, the ideal is not to have miracles, but for nature to continue in its usual way. The Maharal held that a miracle is not the destruction of nature, but a different, higher order of nature, and that there is also an order to miracles. Regular nature is blind and does not distinguish between the righteous and evil. A miracle is full of supreme intellect. It rips open the letter and reveals the divine contents (Gevurot Hashem, second introduction). There is a problem with the opinion of the Ralbag based on the words of the Haggadah here. If miracles are a sign of lack of faith for Israel,

must now say that in Egypt they were struck by fifty plagues, and at the sea they were struck by two hundred and fifty plagues.

————— Commentary —————

why do our Sages increase the quantity of miracles – are they not worthy of our praise? Incidentally, the version of the Haggadah of Rav Sa'adia Gaon and the Rambam do not contain the three paragraphs of Rabbi Yosi Ha-Galilee, Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Akiva. Rabbi Avraham ben Ha-Rambam asked his father about this omission and the Rambam responded that he and his teachers did have the custom to recite them, but did not include them in the Haggadah since there is no requirement to do so, and some places do not recite them.

It is also possible to raise a question about the position of the Maharal from a Gemara in Shabbat: It once happened that a woman died, leaving a nursing baby. The baby did not have any milk. A miracle occurred and the father developed breasts and was able to nurse the baby. Rav Yosef was amazed: This man had great merits to merit such a miracle! But Abaye said: On the contrary - it is demeaning that the order of creation had to be changed for him (Shabbat 53b). According to the Maharal, that a miracle is a higher order of creation, what is so bad about what occurred? **Answer:** A miracle does not have to come in place of nature. A problem which can be solved by nature, such as finding a nursing woman, should not be solved by a miracle. There is no need to bother the Master of the Universe. When nature continues in its usual path then miracles build an additional level, but when nature is belittled, a miracle is considered a burden towards Heaven (Olat Re'eyah vol. 1, Inyanei Tefilah, p. 19).

One should not view miracles and nature as competitors, as is done by those who are confused about faith (Orot Ha-Kodesh 4, p. 504).

כִּמָּה מַעֲלוֹת טוֹבוֹת לַמָּקוֹם עָלֵינוּ:

אֱלֹהֵינוּ הוֹצִיאָנוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם,
וְלֹא עָשָׂה בְּהֵם שְׁפָטִים,
דִּינֵנוּ:

אֱלֹהֵינוּ עָשָׂה בְּהֵם שְׁפָטִים,
וְלֹא עָשָׂה בְּאֱלֹהֵיהֶם,
דִּינֵנוּ:

אֱלֹהֵינוּ עָשָׂה בְּאֱלֹהֵיהֶם,
וְלֹא הִרְגָ אֶת־בְּכוֹרֵיהֶם,
דִּינֵנוּ:

————— Commentary —————

Each one has its role and place, as can be seen by one who looks closely. (Orot, Israel and its Revival, 14). The opinions of both the Ralbag and the Maharal are the words of the Living God. There are miracles which supersede nature, and there are miracles which come to strengthen the confused and weak. Therefore, "Aharon said all of the words that Hashem had said to Moshe, and he performed the signs in the sight of the Nation" (Shemot 4:30). There were elders, wise of heart, who did not require signs and wonders, but the simple people requested proof from Moshe Rabbenu. He therefore performed "signs in the sight of the Nation," so that they would believe in Hashem and the Redemption (see Torah Sheleimah, ibid. #172).

There seem to be contradictions in the way Hashem directs the community. In the War of Ai, Hashem commanded Yehoshua to act through nature and set a trap (Yehoshua 8), but Gideon was commanded to limit his soldiers in order to emphasize the miracle, as it says, "The people that are with you are too many...lest Israel glorify themselves against Me, saying, my own hand has saved me"

How many favors has the Omnipresent One bestowed upon us?

If He had brought us out from Egypt, and had not carried out judgments against them - it would have sufficed.

If He had carried out judgments against them, and not against their idols - it would have sufficed.

If He had destroyed their idols, and had not smitten their first born - it would have sufficed.

————— Commentary —————

(Shoftim 7:2). During the time of Gideon, the Nation forgot about G-d who saved them and they were completely involved in the physical world. If the salvation came through natural means and their own exertion, they would not have recognized the hand of Hashem acting and controlling the events. There was therefore a need for a clear miracle. In the time of Yehoshua, the Nation was at a higher level, capable of understanding the way of nature and its causes, and that it all stems from Hashem. When they saw the hand of Hashem acting through their medium and exertion, they were drawn closer to their Creator (Ayn Aya, Berachot, chapter 1 #143). Our revered teacher, Rav Kook, writes that when darkness overcomes the world and limited knowledge causes faith to disappear, there is a need to reveal Divine Providence through miracles and change the ways of nature. In the time to come, however, when the world will be filled with the knowledge of Hashem and He pours His spirit onto all people, there will be no more need for miracles or changes in the nature, since the consistent ways of nature under divine direction relate the honor of G-d and brings the Blessed One close to His creatures (Olat Re'eiyah vol. 2, p. 270). Similarly, the Rambam wrote that the role of the Messiah is not to

אֱלֹהֵי הַרְגֵם אֶת־בְּכוֹרֵיהֶם,
וְלֹא נָתַן לָנוּ אֶת־מְמוֹנָם,
דִּינֵנו:

אֱלֹהֵי נָתַן לָנוּ אֶת־מְמוֹנָם,
וְלֹא קָרַע לָנוּ אֶת־הַיָּם,
דִּינֵנו:

אֱלֹהֵי קָרַע לָנוּ אֶת־הַיָּם,
וְלֹא הֶעֱבִירָנוּ בְּתוֹכוֹ בְּחַרְבָּה,
דִּינֵנו:

אֱלֹהֵי הֶעֱבִירָנוּ בְּתוֹכוֹ בְּחַרְבָּה,
וְלֹא שָׁקַע צְרִינוֹ בְּתוֹכוֹ,
דִּינֵנו:

————— Commentary —————

perform miracles (Hilchot Melachim 11:3, 12:1). The Master of the Universe not only reveals Himself through miracles, but also through His actions. "The heavens declare the glory of G-d, and the firmament proclaims His handiwork" (Tehillim 19:2) (Rabbenu, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah, *ibid.*, p. 52).

Even now, there cannot be too many miracles or it will take away free choice. Miracles only occur at certain times (Rabbenu, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah, *ibid.*). "And all flesh will see it together, for the mouth of Hashem has spoken" (Yeshayahu 40:5). True divine direction needs to be revealed through the actions of people: When one performs acts of goodness, blessing is showered upon him; and when he is distant from Hashem, then His face is hidden from him. Miracles, however, prevent free choice and eliminate the need for tribulation. In the future, when the time for our trials has come to an end, there will no longer be a need for free choice; and then the totality of divine direction will be revealed, as well as the difference between a righteous and wicked person, and between a servant of G-d and one who did not serve Him (Olat Re'iyah vol. 2, p. 270).

If He had smitten their first born, and had not given us their wealth - it would have sufficed.

If He had given us their wealth, and had not split the sea for us - it would have sufficed.

If He had split the sea for us, and had not taken us through it on dry land - it would have sufficed.

If He had taken us through the sea on dry land, and had not drowned our oppressors in it - it would have sufficed.

————— Commentary —————

"We are now in a state of trial, but there will be no need for trials in the time to come" (Rabbenu, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah ibid.).

Questions

1. Why do we ritually wash our hand before eating karpas?
2. What did Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah mean when he said: "I am like a seventy year old man"?
3. What animals are mentioned in the Haggadah?
4. What vegetation is mentioned in the Haggadah?
5. What is the connection between "bikkurim" (the first fruits) and the Haggadah?

Answers: 1. We ritually wash before eating something dipped in a liquid which makes something susceptible to impurity during the time of the Temple. 2. He was appointed head of the Sanhedrin (Jewish Supreme Court) at the age of eighteen and his hair turned white. 3. Frogs, lice, wild beasts, camel, horse, donkey, cattle, flocks, eagle, deer, lion, ox, cat, dog, kid and bees. 4. Karpas, matzah which is made from wheat, grapevine, vegetables, maror, the staff of G-d which is made from wood, sheaves - "a bearer of sheaves" (Shir Ha-Ma'a lot) and bread ("This is the bread of affliction" and in blessing after eating). 5. The Haggadah explains the verses of the Torah which were recited by a farmer when he brought his first fruits to the Temple.

אלו שקע צרינו בתוכו,

ולא ספק צרכנו במדבר ארבעים שנה,

דינו:

אלו ספק צרכנו במדבר ארבעים שנה,

ולא האכילנו את-המן,

דינו:

אלו האכילנו את-המן,

ולא נתן לנו את-השבת,

דינו:

אלו נתן לנו את-השבת,

ולא קרבנו לפני הר סיני,

דינו:

אלו קרבנו לפני הר סיני,

ולא נתן לנו את-התורה,

דינו:

————— Commentary —————

If He had He brought us before Mount Sinai

Question: "Had He brought us before Mount Sinai, and not given us the Torah – it would have been enough." Is there any value to visiting Mount Sinai if it is not for the sake of receiving the Torah?

Answer: Coming close to Mount Sinai has an independent value aside from receiving the Torah: Coming close to Hashem, the revelation of the Divine Presence, and accepting upon ourselves the yoke of the Heavenly Kingdom. This incredible meeting with the Master of the Universe is the basis for receiving the Torah. Our Rabbis therefore regularly used two terms: Standing at Mount Sinai (Ma'amad Har Sinai) and the Giving of the Torah (Matan Torah). Our Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah, similarly explained that standing

If He had drowned our oppressors in it, and had not supplied our needs in the desert for forty years - it would have sufficed.

If He had supplied our needs in the desert for forty years, and had not fed us the manna - it would have sufficed.

If He had fed us the manna, and had not given us the Shabbat - it would have sufficed.

If He had given us the Shabbat, and had not brought us before Mount Sinai - it would have sufficed.

If He had brought us before Mount Sinai, and had not given us the Torah - it would have sufficed.

————— Commentary —————

at Mount Sinai has a unique aspect in and of itself. "The place upon which you are standing is holy ground" (Shemot 3:5). We are fortunate that we merited standing on this place during "The Standing at Mount Sinai." "Israel which stood on Mount Sinai" (Shabbat 146a)! "Had He brought us before Mount Sinai, and not given us the Torah – it would have been enough." Based on this "standing," the divine, historical event of giving and receiving the Torah was established. Our having the Torah and mitzvot is only because of our connection to this "standing" (Sichot Rabbenu – Shemot, p. 244 and see ibid. p. 40). Rav Kook, wrote: "Mount Sinai became valued through our standing upon it, facing the holiness which Hashem, may He be blessed, rested upon it. Israel was elevated from the depths to which they had descended in Egypt and from the depths of humanity, and they returned to their supreme exalted status" (Midbar Shur, sermon #31).

אלו נתן לנו את־התורה,
 דינו: ולא הכניסנו לארץ ישראל,

אלו הכניסנו לארץ ישראל,
 דינו: ולא בנה לנו את־בית הבחירה,

על אחת כמה וכמה טובה כפולה ומכפלת למקום
 עלינו:

שהוציאנו ממצרים,

ועשה בהם שפטים,

ועשה באלהיהם,

והרג את־בכוריהם,

ונתן לנו את־ממונם,

וקרע לנו את־הים,

והעבירנו בתוכו בחרבה,

ושקע צרינו בתוכו,

וספק צרכנו במדבר ארבעים שנה,

והאכילנו את־המן,

ונתן לנו את־השבת,

If He had given us the Torah, and had not brought us into the Land of Israel - it would have sufficed.

If He had brought us into the Land of Israel, and had not built the Temple for us – it would have sufficed.

How much more so should we therefore be grateful to the Omnipresent One for the doubled and redoubled goodness that He has bestowed upon us? For He brought us out of Egypt, and carried out judgments against them, and against their idols, and smote their first born, and gave us their wealth, and split the sea for us, and took us through it on dry land, and drowned our oppressors in it, and supplied our needs in the desert for forty years, and fed us the manna, and gave us the Shabbat, and brought us before Mount Sinai, and gave us

————— Commentary —————

If we received the Torah, but did not enter the Land of Israel

A certain Rav explained the line in the Haggadah, "If we received the Torah, but did not enter the Land of Israel – it would have been enough," that it would have been better for the non-religious pioneers to have remained outside of Israel rather than to commit sins in the Land of Israel. These words caused much consternation and when the students came to class, they told our Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah, what they had heard. They thought he would discuss this issue at length, but he responded briefly: "See Yalkut Shimoni #1038" and taught the class as usual (The Yalkut Shimoni says: If only my children, my Nation, would be in the Land of Israel, even though they make it impure).

וְקִרְבָּנוּ לְפָנֵי הַר סִינַי,
 וְנָתַן לָנוּ אֶת־הַתּוֹרָה,
 וְהִכְנִיסָנוּ לְאֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל,
 וּבָנָה לָנוּ אֶת־בַּיִת הַבְּחִירָה,
 לְכַפֵּר עַל־כָּל־עֲוֹנוֹתֵינוּ.

רַבּוֹן גַּמְלִיאֵל הִיא אֹמֵר: כָּל שֶׁלֹּא אָמַר שְׁלֹשָׁה
 דְּבָרִים אֵלּוּ בַּפֶּסַח, לֹא יֵצֵא יְדֵי חוּבָתוֹ, וְאֵלּוּ הֵן:

פֶּסַח. מִצָּה. וּמְרוֹר:

פֶּסַח שֶׁהָיוּ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ אוֹכְלִים, בְּזִמּוֹן שְׁבִית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ
 הִיא קִיָּם, עַל שׁוֹם מָה?

————— Commentary —————

These three things

"Whoever does not discuss these three things on Pesach has not fulfilled his obligation." It is obviously not enough just to say these words; there is also a requirement to understand them. Someone who does not understand these three things does not understand what the Exodus was about.

The Pesach Sacrifice...what does it signify? – Part 1

Question: "What is the reason for the Pesach sacrifice? Because The Holy One, blessed be He, passed over our fathers' houses in Egypt," when He killed the firstborn of Egypt. Why would we even

the Torah, and brought us into the Land of Israel and built for us the Temple to atone for all our sins.

Rabban Gamliel used to say: Whoever does not discuss three things on Passover has not fulfilled his obligation, and they are:

The Pesach sacrifice, Matzah and Maror

The Pesach Sacrifice that our fathers ate during the time of the Temple - what does it signify? Because the

————— Commentary —————

think that Hashem would kill the firstborn of Israel? Wasn't the plague in order to save us?

Answer: The firstborn of Egypt were punished because of their corrupt nature, but the Nation of Israel was not righteous either. The angel of Egypt pointed this out during the splitting of the Red Sea: These and these are idol worshippers. Why are You saving these and killing those? We had also sunk to the forty-ninth level of impurity. We merited being saved not on account of our merit, but because of the intrinsic value of our character. Our sins do not weaken the connection between us and the Master of the Universe. The sin is external. This is essential to understanding the relationship between Hashem and the Nation of Israel. From then until now, death passes over our houses. All of the nations disappear and we continue for eternity.

The Pesach Sacrifice...what does it signify? – Part 2

Question: We refer to the holiday as "Pesach – Passover," because Hashem passed over the houses of the Children of Israel. This seems like a secondary matter. Wouldn't it have been more appropriate to refer to the holiday as "Chag Cherut – the Holiday of Freedom," or

עַל שׁוֹם שְׁפָסַח הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא, עַל בְּתֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ
בְּמִצְרַיִם, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וְאִמְרַתֶּם זָבַח פֶּסַח הוּא לִי, אֲשֶׁר
פָּסַח עַל בְּתֵי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּמִצְרַיִם, בְּנִגְפוֹ אֶת־מִצְרַיִם
וְאֶת־בְּתֵינוּ הִצִּיל, וַיִּקַּד הָעַם וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ.

מצה זו שְׁאָנוּ אוֹכְלִים, עַל שׁוֹם מָה? עַל שׁוֹם שֶׁלֹּא
הִסְפִּיק בְּצֶקֶם שֶׁל אֲבוֹתֵינוּ לְהַחֲמִיץ, עַד

————— Commentary —————

"Chag Ha-Geulah – the Holiday of Redemption" or "Yetzi'at Mitzrayim – the Exodus from Egypt"?

Answer: Would it even enter one's mind that Hashem would kill the Jewish firstborn? This was our redemption! This, however, is exactly the problem. We – like the Egyptians – were not righteous (see Rambam, Hilchot Avodah Zarah, end of chapter 1), nor were our firstborn righteous. Hashem nevertheless leaped over mountains and jumped over hills (Shir Ha-Shirim 2:8) and redeemed us despite our deficiencies (Shir Ha-Shirim Rabbah ibid)

This matzah

"This matzah that we eat – what does it mean?" First of all, we eat the matzah to fulfill the will of Hashem wholeheartedly, out of faith and devotion. "This matzah that we eat." Afterwards, there is room for examination: "What does it mean?" Since the essence of fulfilling mitzvot is that they are the will of Hashem, we recite the blessing: "Who made us holy with His mitzvot and commanded us." All of the reasons as to why we fulfill the mitzvot are minuscule in comparison to the supreme goal of performing Hashem's will (see Musar Avicha 2, 4).

Omnipresent passed over our fathers' houses in Egypt, as it is said: "You shall say, 'It is a Passover-offering to Hashem, because He passed over the houses of the Children of Israel in Egypt when He struck the Egyptians with a plague, and He saved our houses. And the people bowed and prostrated themselves.'"

We pick up the matzah and say:

This Matzah that we eat - what does it signify? Because the dough of our fathers did not have time to rise

————— Commentary —————

This Matzah that we eat - what does it signify?

Question: "Because the dough of our forefathers did not have time to become leavened before the King of Kings, The Holy One, blessed be He, revealed Himself to them and redeemed them." We left in haste. "For you left the land of Egypt in haste" (Devarim 16:3). But there is an additional reason why we eat matzah on Pesach: Because it is "poor people's bread" (ibid.). We already ate matzah in Egypt! "This is the bread of affliction that our fathers ate in the land of Egypt." If so, what is the reason for eating matzah – poor people's bread or the haste of leaving?

Answer: Our Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah, explained that there are two aspects: The mitzvah of eating matzah corresponds to the poor people's bread, while the prohibition of eating chametz (leaven) corresponds to leaving in haste (Rabbenu, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah, ibid. p. 70).

Question: Why was the redemption miraculous and sudden instead of gradual and natural?

Answer: If the Nation of Israel would have been created by a gradual and natural development, the fundamentals of Egyptian culture would have been mixed in. Hashem wanted a new nation

שֶׁנִּגְלָה עֲלֵיהֶם מְלֶךְ מַלְכֵי הַמְּלָכִים, הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא,
 וּגְאָלָם, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וַיֹּאפֹּו אֶת־הַבָּצֵק, אֲשֶׁר הוֹצִיאוּ
 מִמִּצְרַיִם, עֶגְתַּ מִּצּוֹת, כִּי לֹא חֲמֵץ: כִּי גִרְשׁוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם,
 וְלֹא יָכְלוּ לְהַתְמַהֵמָה, וְגַם צָדָה לֹא עָשׂוּ לָהֶם.

————— Commentary —————

to be born, from which any earlier nationality was erased, so that it could have a divine form. "Hashem alone guided them, and no other power was with them" (Devarim 32:12). The entire Nation was therefore born at one time (Based on Yeshayahu 66:8). A gradual and natural development of the Nation of Israel would have prevented reaching a supreme, divine level. Haste was therefore required.

The subject of the value of Israeli nationality was actually a dispute between Ha-Gaon Ha-Rav Mordechai Eliashberg, the Rabbi of Boisk, and our revered teacher, Rav Kook, when he was a young Torah scholar. Ha-Rav Eliashberg held that we are a Nation like all other nations, and we develop like all others. Every nation has a unique value and unique traits. We need to be like any nation with a national love and feeling. Just as familial love is human nature, so too is the larger familial love of the nation. We have a communal, secular quality as a nation and, in addition, we have something special: The uniqueness of our Nation. Rav Kook, disagreed with him in a harsh manner: All of our being, all of our nationality, is holy from its origin. It is not that there is a nationality and there is holiness on it, but from the beginning of our origins – everything is holy! The haste emphasizes that our nationality also has a divine value (Rabbenu, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah, *ibid.* p. 71; *Le-Shelosha Be-Elul* vol. 1 #11; *Sichot Ha-Re'iyah*, pp. 157-158 and see *Orot*, p. 155 #8).

There is a difference between the redemption from Egypt and the future redemption. Rav Kook explained that what characterized the redemption from Egypt was haste: Haste of the Divine Presence, haste of Israel and haste of Egypt (Berachot 9a). Everything was

before the Kings of Kings, the Holy One, Blessed be He, revealed Himself to them and redeemed them. Thus it is said: "They baked matzah cakes from the dough that they had brought out of Egypt, because it was not leavened; for they had been driven out of Egypt and could not delay, and they had also not prepared any [other] provisions."

————— Commentary —————

done quickly, like an arrow shot from a bow. A group of slaves, who had almost forgotten the genius of their inner soul, urgently rose up and became a great Nation full of strength, valor and spiritual nobility, as the world had never seen. This wonder occurred in order to separate this Nation from all the dark confusion of the idol worshipping peoples of the world.

In contrast, it is said about the future Redemption: "You will not leave in haste" (Yeshayahu 52:12). We head toward the Redemption with measured steps, no longer fleeing from the entire world. We do not need to separate ourselves so acutely from the other nations. Over the course of time, we have already managed to illuminate many horizons which were full of darkness. The influence of the Torah has spread, and the light of Israel "will be like illuminating stars to many nations." We therefore need to complete this great labor "to be an eternal light to all of the nations under the heavens," to present the light in a clear manner. Another mighty aim is to purify ourselves from every foreign inclination which sticks to us from our being mixed among the non-Jews during the course of the long Exile. These are lengthy labors and we will not attain them in haste (Ma'amrei Ha-Re'eiya, p. 165).

And they also did not prepare provisions

Question: What were they thinking? What did they think they were going to eat during the entire journey?

מָרוֹר זֶה שְׂאֲנוּ אוֹכְלִים, עַל שׁוֹם מָה? עַל שׁוֹם
 שְׂמָרוּ הַמְצָרִים אֶת־חַיֵּי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ בְּמִצְרַיִם,
 שְׁנֵאָמַר: וַיִּמְרְרוּ אֶת־חַיֵּיהֶם בְּעַבְדָּה קָשָׁה, בְּחָמַר
 וּבִלְבָנִים, וּבְכָל־עַבְדָּה בְּשָׂדֵה: אֵת כָּל־עַבְדָּתָם, אֲשֶׁר
 עָבְדוּ בָהֶם בְּפָרָךְ.

 Commentary

Answer: It is not written in the Torah, but in The Prophets: "I remember the kindness of your youth, the love of your betrothal, when you followed Me into the desert, in a land that was not sown" (Yirmiyahu 2:2) – faith.

This Maror that we eat - what does it signify? – Part 1

"Because the Egyptians embittered our fathers' lives in Egypt." Our ideal is freedom, not bitterness. "All members of Israel are sons of kings" (Shabbat 67a). A definition of freedom is development through internal and natural means without the intrusion of any foreign influences. However, there is waste material which attaches itself and chokes the pure nature of Israel and keeps it concealed. There is therefore a need for bitterness in order to remove these negative aspects. When we understand this idea, we lovingly accept the pleasant servitude, the work of a servant of Hashem, the G-d of Israel, to which we became accustomed during Egyptian slavery. Servitude to non-Jews is a negative thing, but it is possible to elevate it to heaven. If so, slavery in Egypt is the preparation for supreme freedom (Olat Re'eiya vol. 2, pp. 288-289).

This Maror that we eat - what does it signify? – Part 2

Question: "Maror – because the Egyptians embittered our fathers' lives in Egypt." This seems to be oppressive slavery. What do we learn from it?

We pick up the maror and say:

This Maror that we eat - what does it signify? Because the Egyptians embittered our fathers' lives in Egypt, as it is said: "They made their lives bitter with hard service, with mortar and with bricks, and with all manner of service in the field; all their service which they made them serve with rigor."

————— Commentary —————

Answer: This bitterness is also a part of the divine direction of our redemption. We became a Nation out of the midst of the fiery furnace of affliction. This bitterness is also from the Master of the Universe, and it has a role in the creation of the Nation of Israel. This is similar to what Hashem responded to Avraham Avinu's question of how we will know that we will inherit the Land: "Your offspring will be strangers in a land not their own, they will serve them, and they will oppress them four hundred years" (Bereshit 15:13). The affliction and oppression are also paths to elevating the individual and the community.

Our revered teacher, Rav Kook, explains that there are two ways to elevate and exalt all of the powers of life: The first way is when one is in idyllic conditions, when the time is right and when he is free to develop without encumbrances, it is then possible to grow and blossom. The second way, although it is its opposite, is when everything is contrary, when there are obstacles and difficulties. It is precisely then that one begins to blossom (Olat Re'eiyah vol. 2, p. 262). It is not always "because of," sometimes it is "despite." We see this clearly in the verse: "But as much as they would oppress it (the Children of Israel), it would increase and spread out" (Shemot 1:12). The Nation did not crystallize in one day. This is a lengthy process with constant afflictions, crises and trials.

————— Commentary —————

The Exodus is the springtime of the Nation and "the springtime of the entire world" (Meged Yerachim – Nissan – sayings for each month by our revered teacher, Rav Kook). The breakthrough of the Nation of Israel onto the stages of history occurred during the springtime of nature. A sleep descends upon the life force during the wintertime, but this hibernation is exactly what prepares the powerful breakthrough when spring arrives (Olat Re'eyah ibid.). The blossoming of a nation does not develop linearly. There are many crises and afflictions, but they all add to the ascension. Just as it was in those days, so too in our time. Do not panic if there is distress and affliction in our path. On the contrary, we must increase courage and strength.

This Maror that we eat - what does it signify? – Part 3

Many have the custom to use lettuce ("chasa" in Hebrew) for the maror. The Sefer Ha-Chinuch explains that this is hinted in the fact that the Merciful One had mercy ("chas" – the same Hebrew letters as "chasa") on us and redeemed us from the grip of the evil Egyptians. People therefore have an awakening and remembrance of the miracles which were performed for us in Egypt (Sefer Ha-Chinuch #381).

Matzah and maror

Question: Shouldn't the order be reversed – maror followed by matzah? Affliction preceded redemption.

Answer: Such is the nature of man. After he experiences salvation, he forgets the distressful times and thus does not value the good times. We therefore must continue to remember the past bitterness even after we have achieved freedom. The author of "Chovot Levavot" discussed at length that one must remember the bad days during the good days. The Rambam also wrote about this in Moreh Nevuchim (3:24).

Commentary

With matzot and maror

Question: Doesn't it seem inappropriate to eat bitter herbs at a meal of thanksgiving and redemption? Shouldn't we eat only tasty foods?

Answer: It is forbidden for us to deceive ourselves. We must realize that there is also bitterness within glorious events, and all the more so on the way to redemption. The Messiah comes when people are not thinking about it, i.e. in unexpected ways. The Gemara in Sanhedrin (97a) says: "Three things only come when people are not thinking about them – the Messiah, finding a lost object, and a scorpion." We can ask: This is an important piece of information regarding the Messiah so that people do not despair, but why do we need to know this about a lost object and a scorpion? The Meharsha answered that this is all one subject because for one person the coming of the Messiah is like finding a lost object, while for another it is like a scorpion. It all depends on his merits (Meharsha *ibid.*). One who imagines the coming of the Messiah as a hedge of roses will be disappointed when he sees difficulties and he will rebel against the Redemption, like one who finds a scorpion. But one who knows that redemption is acquired with suffering will rejoice at everything his eyes see, like finding a lost object. One, however, should not make the opposite error. We are not so pessimistic as to see bitterness in everything. We are realists or, more precisely, we are idealistic-realists. There are people who consider themselves as realists and see everything in black, and there are people who consider themselves idealistic and see everything with rose-colored glasses. Neither one of these will bring the Redemption. We are optimistic and we know that good will overcome evil, and that in a dynamic manner good will continue to conquer evil in the world. The Master of the Universe, the Creator of the World, is good to everything and His mercies are on all of his creatures; "G-d saw it was good," "very good." The Rambam clarified in an organized

בְּכָל-דּוֹר וְדוֹר חֵיב אָדָם לִרְאוֹת אֶת-עַצְמוֹ,
 כְּאִלּוּ הוּא יֵצֵא מִמִּצְרַיִם, שְׁנֵאמַר:
 וְהִגַּדְתָּ לְבְנֶךָ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא לֵאמֹר: בְּעִבּוֹר זֶה עָשָׂה יי לִי,
 בְּיֵצְאֹתִי מִמִּצְרַיִם. לֹא אֶת-אֲבוֹתֵינוּ בִלְבָד, גָּאֵל הַקְּדוֹשׁ
 בְּרוּךְ הוּא, אֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ גָּאֵל עַמָּהֶם, שְׁנֵאמַר: וְאוֹתָנוּ
 הוֹצִיא מִשָּׁם, לְמַעַן הִבִּיא אֹתָנוּ, לְתֵת לָנוּ אֶת-הָאָרֶץ
 אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לְאַבְרָהָם.

————— Commentary —————

fashion how our world is mostly good and only slightly evil (Moreh Nevuchim 3:12). Our world is good, but we must realize from the outset that there is also some bitterness in it. Rabbenu Bachya placed a condition on the service of Hashem that one must be ready to accept the bitterness (Chovot Levavot, Sha'ar Avodat Ha-Elohim, chapter 5). Our revered teacher, Rav Kook, wrote: "This is completely necessary, and any time that he says to himself 'peace, peace' and only pleasantness will follow on a paved way, he is close to the stumbling block" (Musar Avicha, p. 34). The Land of Israel is also acquired through suffering (Berachot 5a). Hillel the Elder is the one who teaches us to wrap the matzah of redemption with the maror bitterness. He lived in extreme poverty and learned through the chimney, while he was covered with snow (Yoma 35b), and he became the "Nasi" (head of the Sanhedrin) of Israel.

Questions

1. Who married his niece? (2 answers)
2. Who married his cousin?
3. Who married his cousin's daughter?
4. Whose mother was also his cousin?
5. Who was the grandson and great-grandson of the same man? (3 answers)

In every generation a person is obligated to regard himself as if he had come out of Egypt, as it is said: "You shall tell your child on that day, it is because of this that Hashem did for me when I left Egypt." The Holy One, Blessed be He, redeemed not only our fathers from Egypt, but He also redeemed us with them, as it is said: "It was us that He brought out from there, so that He might bring us to give us the land that He swore to our fathers."

————— Commentary —————

6. What is the name of Tiras' father?
7. What is the name of Ashkenaz's father?
8. What is the name of Kush's son: Saba, Savta or Sabtecha?
9. Who married his aunt?
10. What is the family relation between Aharon and Nachshon ben Aminadav?

Answers: 1. Avraham, Yosef. 2. Yaakov. 3. Yitzchak. 4. Yitzchak. 5. Yitzchak, Ephraim and Menasheh. 6. Yafet (Bereshit 10:2). 7. Gomer (Bereshit 10:3). 8. All three (Bereshit 10:7). 9. Amram. 10. Brothers'-in-law.

In every generation one is obligated to regard himself as if he had left Egypt

Question: How is this statement put into practice?

Answer: This is not a passive perspective, but an active one. Redemption began with the Exodus, but it continues throughout the generations until we reach the complete Redemption (Orot, Israel and its Revival, 28). Everyone must therefore do his part according to his ability and his generation. The Nation of Israel was born in Egypt, when all of its treasures were hidden within, but they were actualized throughout the generations. Just as each person has a part in Torah, "and provide us with our part in Your Torah," so too

לְפִיכָךְ אֲנַחְנוּ חַיִּיבִים לְהוֹדוֹת, לְהִלָּל, לְשַׁבַּח,
 לְפָאֵר, לְרוֹמֵם, לְהַדָּר, לְנַצַּח, לְבָרֵךְ,
 לְעֹלָה וּלְקַלֵּס, לְמִי שֶׁעָשָׂה לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ וְלָנוּ אֶת־כָּל־
 הַנְּסִים הָאֵלֶּה. הוֹצִיאָנוּ מֵעֲבָדוֹת לְחֵרוֹת, מִיַּגוֹן
 לְשִׁמְחָה, וּמֵאֶבֶל לְיוֹם טוֹב, וּמֵאִפְלָה לְאוֹר גְּדוֹל,
 וּמִשְׁעָבוֹד לְגֵאֻלָּה. וְנֹאמֵר לְפָנָיו שִׁירָה חֲדָשָׁה. הַלְלוּיָהּ:

הַלְלוּיָהּ. הִלְלוּ עַבְדֵי יְיָ. הִלְלוּ אֶת־שֵׁם יְיָ. יְהִי שֵׁם
 יְיָ מְבָרָךְ מֵעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם: מִמְזֶרֶח
 שֶׁשָּׁשׁ עַד מְבוֹאוֹ. מִהַלֵּל שֵׁם יְיָ. רַם עַל־כָּל־גּוֹיִם יְיָ.

————— Commentary —————

does each person have a part in the Redemption of the Nation (Olat Re'eiyah vol. 2, p. 283).

The Rambam quoted this idea in a different way in the Mishneh Torah: "In every generation each person is obligated to show himself as if he himself has just been freed from the slavery of Egypt, as it is said: "He freed us from there" (Devarim 6:23). Instead of "to regard himself," the Rambam wrote that a person is obligated "to show himself" in an active manner. He also brings a proof for this idea from the fact that Hashem commands in the Torah: "Remember that you were a slave" (Devarim 5:15, 15:15, 24:18, 24:22). In other words, it is as if you yourself were a slave and had been freed and redeemed (Mishneh Torah, Laws of Chametz 7:6). Our Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah, said that we see here the fruition of the idea of the "connection between the individual and the community in Israel" (Orot, Orot Yisrael, chapter 2). Each one of us is complete when he is connected to and lives with connection to Klal Yisrael (the entirety of Israel). As a result, although the Pesach sacrifice is a personal sacrifice, it has the legal status of a communal sacrifice which supersedes Shabbat and is sacrificed when Israel is gathered together

Cover the matzah, raise the cup and say in a loud, joyous voice:

We are therefore obligated to thank, laud, praise, glorify, exalt, adore, bless, elevate and honor the One who performed all of these miracles for our fathers and for us. He took us from slavery to freedom, from sorrow to joy, and from mourning to festivity, and from deep darkness to great light and from bondage to redemption. Let us therefore recite before Him a new song of praise:

Praise G-d! Offer praise, you servants of Hashem; praise the Name of Hashem. May Hashem's Name be blessed from now and to all eternity. From the rising of the sun to its setting, Hashem's Name is praised. Hashem is high above all nations, His glory is over the heavens.

————— Commentary —————

(Yoma 51a). "Not only did the Holy One blessed be He redeem our forefathers, He also redeemed us with them." Each of us as individuals is connected to "Klal Yisrael." This is the essence of the matter, the foundation of the entire Torah. "Who chose us from all of the nations and gave us His Torah" (the blessing over Torah).

Hallel

Question: Why do we say Hallel on Seder night?

Answer: Because the Pesach sacrifice must be accompanied with the recitation of Hallel (Pesachim 95a).

Question: Why do we recite Hallel without a blessing at the Seder?

Answer: Rav Hai Gaon says because this is not a mere recitation, but a song, i.e. it is natural.

Question: Why do we recite Hallel while seated on Seder night when we recite it while standing the rest of the year?

עַל הַשָּׁמַיִם כְּבוֹדוֹ: מִי כִּי אֱלֹהֵינוּ. הַמְּגַבִּיהִי לְשָׁבֶת:
הַמְּשַׁפִּילִי לְרֵאוֹת בְּשָׁמַיִם וּבָאָרֶץ: מְקִימִי מֵעַפָּר דָּל.
מֵאֲשַׁפֶּת יָרִים אָבִיוֹן: לְהוֹשִׁיבִי עִם־נְדִיבִים. עִם נְדִיבֵי
עַמּוֹ: מוֹשִׁיבִי עֶקְרֶת הַבַּיִת אִם הַבָּנִים שְׂמַחָה.
הַלְלוּיָהּ:

בְּצֵאת יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרַיִם, בֵּית יַעֲקֹב מֵעַם לְעֹז:
הִיְתָה יְהוּדָה לְקֹדֶשׁוֹ. יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמְּשֻׁלוֹתָיו:
הֵי אֵם רָאָה וַיִּנָּס, הִירְדּוֹן יֹסֵב לְאַחֹר: הֶהָרִים רָקְדּוּ

————— Commentary —————

Answer: This is the way of reclining and showing our freedom (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 480 and Mishnah Berurah #1).

Question: Why do we divide Hallel into two parts: One before the meal and one after the meal?

Answer: Wine must be connected to song. The first cup of wine is for Kiddush, the third cup is for Birkat Ha-mazon (blessing after eating) and the fourth cup is for Hallel. In what way is the second cup honored? The "Manhig" (#90) explained that because the Haggadah is simply stories, we therefore need a part of Hallel for the second cup. Another explanation: The "Levush" (Orach Chaim 480) wrote that the first part of Hallel discusses the Exodus, which is connected to the Haggadah, while the second part of Hallel discusses future redemptions and the Final Redemption. It is therefore recited after the meal. Another explanation: The Chasidic Rebbe of Gur says that the meal which is eaten between the two parts of Hallel also needs to be completely holy, pure, and full of praise to Hashem. The meal is therefore not an interruption, since everything is one continuum.

Who is like Hashem, our G-d, who dwells on high yet looks down so low upon heaven and earth. He raises the poor from the dust, He lifts the needy from the dunghill, to seat them with nobles, with the nobles of His people. He restores the barren woman to the house, into a joyful mother of children. Halleluyah.

When Israel went out of Egypt, the House of Yaakov from a people of a foreign language, Yehudah became His holy one, Israel His dominion. The sea saw

————— Commentary —————

Yehudah became His holy one, Israel His dominion

Our Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah, explained that the uniqueness of Yehudah is kingship and governance (Sichot Rabbenu, Bereshit, p. 381). But, as in everything, there are different levels of holiness. The Tabernacle, which had a transitory holiness, was a preparation for the permanent Temple, built upon a foundation of holy ground. There needs to be a certain period of time for a temporary kingship, which is not from the House of David, as a preparation for the permanent kingship of David: The Messiah son of Yosef and the Messiah the son of David (ibid. p. 322).

Israel, His dominions

Our Sages say about the verse, "I did not know that my soul placed me among the chariots of a princely people" (Shir Ha-Shirim 6:12): This is comparable to a princess who was exiled from her father's table and was gathering wheat behind the harvesters. The king passed, recognized that this was his daughter and sat her next to him in his chariot. Her friends were surprised: Yesterday she was gathering wheat and today she is sitting in the king's chariot?! She said to them: Just as you are surprised by me, I am also surprised

כְּאֵילִים. גְּבֻעוֹת כְּבְנֵי־צֹאן: מִה־לֶּדָה הֵיִם כִּי תָנוּס.
 הִירְדוֹן תִּסָּב לְאַחֹר: הֶהָרִים תִּרְקְדוּ כְּאֵילִים. גְּבֻעוֹת
 כְּבְנֵי־צֹאן: מִלִּפְנֵי אָדוֹן חוּלֵי אֶרֶץ. מִלִּפְנֵי אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב:
 הַהֶפְכִי הַצּוּר אֲגַם־מַיִם. חֲלַמֵּשׁ לְמַעֲיָנו־מַיִם.

בְּרִידָה אֲתָה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִלֶּדֶת הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר גָּאֲלָנוּ
 וְגָאֵל אֶת־אֲבוֹתֵינוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם, וְהִגִּיעֵנוּ לְלִילָה
 הַזֶּה, לְאֶכְל־בֹּמֶזֶה וּמְרֹר. כֵּן, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי
 אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, יִגִּיעֵנוּ לְמוֹעֲדִים וְלִרְגָלִים אַחֲרִים, הַבָּאִים
 לְקִרְאתָנוּ לְשָׁלוֹם. שְׂמַחִים בְּבִנְיֹן עִירָדָה, וְשֹׁשֵׁיִם

————— Commentary —————

myself. "I did not know that my soul placed me among the chariots of a princely people." Similarly, the Children of Israel were enslaved with mortar and bricks, disgusting and shameful in the eyes of the Egyptians. They were redeemed and became free people and princes to all of the people of the world. The nations were surprised. We were also surprised (Midrash Rabbah ibid.). We did not know why we merited this, and it was only on account of the eternal love of the Master of the Universe.

The sea saw and fled

When the Children of Israel displayed self-sacrifice and entered the sea, it did not completely split, but it continued to split little-by-little as they walked along. There was thus a display of self-sacrifice in each and every step. Rabbenu Bachya similarly wrote: "And this splitting of the sea was not one long path, but it continued to split before them as they were entering it. They always saw water in front of their eyes, but it was immediately fleeing from them as they approached there. Regarding this, David said: 'The sea saw and

and fled, the Jordan turned backward. The mountains skipped like rams, the hills like young sheep. What is with you, O sea, that you flee? Jordan, that you turn backward? Mountains, why do you skip like rams? Hills (that you skip) like young sheep? (You do this) before the Master who causes the earth to tremble, before the G-d of Yaakov, who turns the rock into a pool of water, the flint-stone into a spring of water.

Blessed are You, Hashem, our G-d, King of the Universe, who has redeemed us and redeemed our fathers from Egypt, and enabled us to attain this night to eat matzah and maror. So too, Hashem, our G-d and G-d of our fathers, enable us to attain other holidays and festivals that will come to us in peace with

————— Commentary —————

fled,' and our Rabbis explain: What did it see? Israel entering it and it fled from them" (commentary of Avot 5:5).

Who turns the rock into a pond of water

Our Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah, explained that divine direction includes both miracles and nature. During the splitting of the Red Sea, the water received a new form: "The water was a wall for them, on their right and their left" (Shemot 14:22,29). The water received the form of a wall, a solid state. The two elements, solid and liquid, are two sides of one entity. Here liquid is changed into a solid and later in the desert, a solid is changed into a liquid. The rock, which is a solid, changed to water (Shemot 17:6), the hard turned into the soft. Divine direction encompasses all of creation: It begins with liquid changing into a solid – "The sea saw and fled, the Yarden was driven back" (Tehillim 114:3), and continues with a solid

בְּעִבּוּדְתֶךָ, וְנֹאכַל שָׁם מִן הַזִּבְחִים וּמִן הַפְּסָחִים (במוצאי שבת אומרים מן הפסחים ומן הזבחים), אֲשֶׁר יִגִּיעַ דָּמָם, עַל קִיר מִזְבֵּחֶךָ לְרִצּוֹן, וְנוֹדָה לְךָ שִׁיר חֲדָשׁ עַל גְּאֻלְתֵּנוּ, וְעַל פְּדוּת נַפְשֵׁנוּ: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, גֹּאֵל יִשְׂרָאֵל:

כוס שני

הַנְּנִי מוֹכֵן וּמְזוּמֵן לְקַיֵּם מִצְוֹת כּוֹס שְׁנִי מֵאַרְבַּע כּוֹסוֹת: לְשֵׁם יְחִוּד קוּדְשָׁא בְּרִידָה הוּא וְשִׁכְיִנְתִּיהָ בְּדַחֲלוֹ וּרְחִימוּ לִיחַד שֵׁם יי"ה בּו"ה בִּיחֻדָּא שְׁלִים עַל יְדֵי הַהוּא טְמִיר וְנַעְלָם בְּשֵׁם כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל. וַיְהִי נַעַם אֲדָנִי אֱלֹהֵינוּ עָלֵינוּ, וּמַעֲשֵׂה יְדִינוּ כּוֹנֵנָה עָלֵינוּ, וּמַעֲשֵׂה יְדִינוּ כּוֹנֵנָהוּ:

**בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ
הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הַגֶּפֶן:**

————— Commentary —————

changing into a liquid – "Who turns the rock into a pond of water, the flint into a spring of water" (ibid. 8). Everything is one divine entity; everything is one divine miracle (Sichot Rabbenu, Shemot, pp. 147-150, 164-166).

Who redeemed Israel

According to Rabbi Tarfon, we do not end the blessing with "Blessed are You, Hashem, who redeemed Israel," but the Halachah follows Rabbi Akiva who holds that we do conclude the blessing in this way (Pesach 116b). This is the same Rabbi Akiva who supported Bar Cochba in his great war for the sake of the redemption of Israel. In this blessing, why do we say, "who redeemed us and redeemed our ancestors" – our ancestors' redemption preceded our redemption?

happiness in the rebuilding of Your city, and with rejoicing in Your service [in the Temple]. Then we shall eat of the sacrifices and of the Pesach sacrifices (when the Seder falls on Saturday night add: of the Pesach sacrifices and of the sacrifices) whose blood shall be sprinkled on the wall of Your altar for acceptance; and we shall thank You with a new song for our redemption and for the deliverance of our souls. Blessed are You, Hashem, who redeemed Israel.

Second cup

Blessed are You, Hashem, our G-d, King of the Universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.

Drink the fourth cup of wine while reclining to the left.

————— Commentary —————

Answer: The treasure of freedom is hidden in our national soul, our ancestors were redeemed out of its midst.

"For our redemption and the redemption of our soul": "For our redemption" corresponds to the physical enslavement – "We were slaves" and "the redemption of our soul" corresponds to our spiritual enslavement – "Our ancestors were idol worshipers." Rabbi Yosi asked Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai: I have a question which troubles me deeply, but I am afraid to ask. Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai said to him: Ask. He said to him: Why does The Holy One, blessed be He, always mention: "I am Hashem, your G-d, who brought you out of Egypt," when He promised this to Avraham Avinu? He answered him: Come and see, my son. The Holy One, blessed be He, only promised Avraham that He would take Israel out of Egyptian slavery, but not from enslavement to another god." In

ס רחצה

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם, אשר
קדשנו במצותיו, וצונו על נטילת ידים:

ס מוציא

הנני מוכן ומזומן לקיים מצות אכילת מצה שנאמר "בערב
תאכלו מצת": לשם יחוד קודשא בריך הוא ושכינתיה בדחילו
ורחימו ליחד שם י"ה בו"ה ביחודא שלים על ידי ההוא טמיר
ונעלם בשם כלי-ישראל.

ויהי נעם אדני אלהינו עלינו, ומעשה ידינו כוננה עלינו, ומעשה
ידינו כוננהו:

ברוך אתה יי, אלהינו מלך
העולם, המוציא לחם מן
הארץ:

————— Commentary —————

Egypt, Israel became so impure that it sank to the forty-ninth level of impurity. Hashem removed them from enslavement to every earthly power, and He also entered them into the forty-ninth level of wisdom. This is not something which He promised Avraham Avinu. He performed goodness and kindnesses for them. We therefore find the Exodus mentioned fifty times in the Torah, and

Ritual Hand Washing for the Meal

The hands are ritually washed before eating the matzah, and the following blessing is recited:

Blessed are You, Hashem, our G-d, King of the Universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us concerning the washing of the hands.

From this point until after eating the Hillel sandwich, one must be careful not to make any unnecessary interruptions (Olat Re'eiyah 2, 243).

Motzi

The leader takes the three matzot (two whole ones and the broken middle one) and recites the blessing:

Blessed are You, Hashem, our G-d, King of the Universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.

————— Commentary —————

we also count forty-nine days of Sefirat Ha-Omer, since on each and every day He removed one level of impurity from them and gave them a level of purity so that they would be worthy of receiving the Torah (Zohar Chadash, Yitro).

Rachtzah – Ritually Washing the Hands

Question: Why did our Sages decree that a person must ritually wash his hands before eating bread even if his hands are clean?

Answer: There is a central point of life here. A person is obligated to eat to sustain his life, but "man does not live by bread alone"

⌘ מִצֵּה ⌘

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ
הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו
וְצִוָּנוּ עַל אֲכִילַת מַצָּה:

⌘ מְרוֹר ⌘

הַנְּנִי מוֹכֵן וּמְזוּמָן לְקִיּוֹם מִצְוֹת אֲכִילַת מְרוֹר: לְשֵׁם יַחֲוֹד קוֹדֶשׁ אֱ
בְּרִיךְ הוּא וְשִׁכְנֵתִי בְּדַחֲלוֹ וּרְחִימוּ לַיְחָד שֵׁם יי בּו"ה בַּיַּחֲוֹד אֱ
שְׁלִים עַל יְדֵי הַהוּא טָמִיר וְנַעֲלָם בְּשֵׁם כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל.

וַיְהִי נַעַם אֲדָנִי אֱלֹהֵינוּ עָלֵינוּ, וּמַעֲשֵׂה יְדִינוּ כּוֹנֵנָה עָלֵינוּ, וּמַעֲשֵׂה
יְדִינוּ כּוֹנֵנָה:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ
הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו
וְצִוָּנוּ עַל אֲכִילַת מְרוֹר:

————— Commentary —————

(Devarim 8:3). There is therefore a need to prepare to establish a proper way to eat. There is a need to prepare, so that one can lift up one's soul. This ritual washing helps us to take all of our lowly inclinations and elevate them to the heights of supreme life (Olat Re'eyah vol. 2, pp. 285-286 and Rabbenu, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah, ibid., p. 68).

Matzah

The bottom matzah is set down and the following blessing is recited while holding the top (whole) and the middle (broken) matzah:

Blessed are You, Hashem, our G-d, King of the Universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us concerning the eating of matzah.

Two pieces of matzah are eaten, one from the top matzah and one from the middle matzah. Each piece must equal the volume of an olive, and be eaten while reclining to the left.

Maror

Each person takes a piece of maror, equaling the volume of an olive, dips it in the charoset, and shakes it off so that the taste of the maror is not nullified by the charoset. The following blessing is then recited:

Blessed are You, Hashem, our G-d, King of the Universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us concerning the eating of maror.

Eat the maror **without** reclining.

————— Commentary —————

Matzah

Our Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehuda, was particular to use machine-made matzah since it was decided by the halachic authorities that machine-made matzah is kosher, and there is, in fact, greater care regarding the concern of chametz than with handmade matzah.

פּוּרְךָ

זֵכֶר לְמִקְדָּשׁ כְּהִלֵּל: כִּן עָשָׂה הַלֵּל בְּזִמְנוֹ
שְׁבִית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ הָיָה קַיָּם. הָיָה כּוּרְךָ פֶּסַח
מִצָּה וּמְרוֹר וְאוֹכֵל בְּיַחַד. לְקַיָּם מֵה
שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: עַל-מִצּוֹת וּמְרוֹרִים יֹאכְלֵהוּ:

————— Commentary —————

A student asked our Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah: Which is preferable, handmade matzah or machine-made? Our Rabbi answered: In the amount of time it would take to handmake matzah for ourselves, the machine could make enough matzah for Reb Noson's (our Rabbi's brother-in-law – Ha-Rav Shalom Natan Ra'anan Kook), myself and many others for the entire holiday.

A remembrance of the Temple like Hillel

This mitzvah of putting the matzah and the maror together as a sandwich is particularly appropriate to the path of Hillel. It would seem that the mitzvah of matzah, which represents freedom, and the mitzvah of maror, which represents Exile, are contradictory and cancel one another out. The Gemara therefore expresses the path of Hillel with the general principle "mitzvot do not nullify one another" (Pesachim 115a). This is in truth the way that Hillel brought close those who seemed far away, and through this he brought them close to the Master of the Universe. Our revered teacher, Rav Kook, wrote: "Hillel's trait is that he loved and pursued peace, he loved people and brought them close to Torah to protect the holiness of the entire Nation of Hashem. May it return to us. We must speak with peace to all of our scattered and different groups, and the light of redemption (which comes together with the remembrance of the Pesach sacrifice and the matzah, the signs of freedom) will sweeten

Korech (Hillel Sandwich)

Take the bottom matzah and the maror, each in an amount equaling the volume of an olive, and dip them into the charoset. Combine the two [like a sandwich], and recite the following:

A remembrance of the Temple, like Hillel. Thus did Hillel do at the time of the Temple: He would combine the Pesach sacrifice, the matzah and the maror and eat them together, as it is said: "They shall eat it with matzah and maror."

Eat the Hillel Sandwich while reclining to the left.

————— Commentary —————

for us the bitter emotions of the Exile and its spiritual and physical suffering. This is what the maror signifies, and we will merit the complete Redemption, which will spread over us as a sukkah of peace, of true light, speedily in our days (Olat Re'eiyah vol. 2, p. 289).

Questions

1. What is "matzah ashirah – rich matzah"?
2. What is the Hebrew word "se'or"?
3. Who traveled with a donkey? (3 answers)
4. Who hid?
5. Who acted mercifully? (2 answers)
6. How many daughters did Yitro have?
7. In the story of the Exodus, who kissed whom? (2 answers)
8. How much older was Aharon than Moshe?
9. About whom is it told that they died before Moshe Rabbenu's mission to redeem the Nation? (3 answers)
10. Where is the giving of the Torah mentioned in the Haggadah?

שולחן עורך

————— Commentary —————

Answers: 1. Flour kneaded with fruit juice. 2. Leaven – even though it is not eaten, it causes others items to become leaven. 3. Avraham, Moshe and the Messiah. 4. Moshe was hidden for three months (Shemot 2:2), hid the Egyptians in the sand (Shemot 2:12) and hid his face from looking at the burning bush (Shemot 3:6). 5. Hashem had mercy on the Nation of Israel and the daughter of Pharaoh had mercy on Moshe. 6. Seven. 7. Moshe kissed Aharon and Moshe kissed Yitro. 8. Three years. 9. Yosef and his brothers, the King of Egypt and all of the men who wanted to kill Moshe for killing the Egyptian. 10. Dayenu.

Shulchan Orech – Eating the festive meal – Part 1

Question: What divine service is there in eating? It seems like a human need of one who is interested in a nice spread.

Answer: There is also a place for enjoying the beauty of the pleasantness of the Seder. While it is true that "Grace is false and beauty is vain" (Mishlei 31:30), the Vilna Gaon explained that a woman who is G-d-fearing is praised through them – grace and beauty. The Torah therefore mentions the beauty of our foremothers. Outer beauty alone is in the category of "Like a jewel of gold in a pig's snout, so is a beautiful woman without discretion" (ibid. 11:22), but when outer beauty is connected to inner beauty it strengthens the latter. In fact, the Temple is called, "The Beauty of the World" (Zevachim 54b) – the most beautiful place in the world. Enjoying the beauty of "Shulchan Orech" (the festive meal) will therefore raise a person to the beauty of the ethical and intellectual sense, and so too the holy traits which are exalted above the exalted (Olat Re'eyah vol. 2, p. 290).

The Festive Meal

It is customary to begin the festive meal by eating an egg as a remembrance of the destruction of the Temple

————— Commentary —————

Shulchan Orech – Eating the festive meal -

Part 2

Eggs: It is customary to eat eggs at the beginning of the meal as a sign of mourning over the destruction of the Temple, because Tisha Be-Av and Pesach always fall on the same day of the week, and we are not currently able to offer the Pesach sacrifice (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 476:2). The connection between Pesach and Tisha Be-Av is this: we left Egypt in haste without being able to repent fully for our transgressions. Despite all of the efforts of the prophets and kings to heal us spiritually, they failed, and our transgressions caused the destruction of both Temples. The connection between these two days is therefore full of faith and hope. Within the destruction of the spirit, seeds of redemption are hidden; and the darkness of exile prepares the light of redemption. Tisha Be-Av is therefore called a "Mo'ed – holiday." Another explanation: How are eggs different from other foods? When other foods are cooked they become softer, but when eggs are cooked they harden. This hints at the nature of Israel: "And as much as they inflicted it, so it would increase and spread out" (Shemot 1:12) (Chatam Sofer).

We do not eat the roasted shankbone of the Seder plate on this night, because we do not eat roasted meat on Seder night (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 473 and Mishnah Berurah #32), as it would appear as if we were eating a sacrifice outside of its designated area (Magen Avraham, Orach Chaim 476). It is permissible to eat roasted

ש צפון ש

לְשֵׁם יְחִיד קוֹדֶשׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא וְשְׂכִינְתֵיהּ בְּדַחֲלֵהוּ וְרַחֲמֵהוּ לְיַחַד שְׁמֵי
 י"ה בּו"ה בְּיַחְוּדָא שְׁלִים עַל יְדֵי הַהוּא טְמִיר וְנַעְלָם בְּשֵׁם
 כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל.

ש בּרך ש

הַנְּנִי מוֹכֵן וּמְזוּמֵן לְקַיִם מְצוֹת עֵשָׂה שֶׁל בְּרַכַּת הַמְזוּן כְּמוֹ שְׁכַתּוּב
 בַּתּוֹרָה וְאֶכְלֵת וְשִׁבַּעַת וּבְרַכַּת אֵת יי אֱלֹהֵיךָ עַל הָאָרֶץ הַטּוֹבָה
 אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לָךְ: לְשֵׁם יְחִיד קוֹדֶשׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא וְשְׂכִינְתֵיהּ בְּדַחֲלֵהוּ
 וְרַחֲמֵהוּ לְיַחַד שְׁמֵי י"ה בּו"ה בְּיַחְוּדָא שְׁלִים עַל יְדֵי הַהוּא טְמִיר
 וְנַעְלָם בְּשֵׁם כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל.

וַיְהִי נַעַם אֲדָנִי אֱלֹהֵינוּ עֲלֵינוּ, וּמַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵינוּ כּוֹנֵנָה עֲלֵינוּ, וּמַעֲשֵׂה
 יְדֵינוּ כּוֹנֵנָהוּ:

שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת בְּשׁוּב יְהוּה אֶת שִׁיבַת צִיּוֹן
 הָיִינוּ כְּחֻלְמִים: אֲזַ יִמְלֵא

————— Commentary —————

fish or eggs (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 476:2 and Mishnah Berurah #9). One may drink wine at the meal, but not too much, so that one does not eat the Afikoman in a state of gluttony.

The "Shelah" writes that the meal should be a spiritual meal in which everyone sits together in purity as if eating before a king. No frivolous talk should be heard in the world, only talk of Hashem.

Afikoman – Part 1

The meaning of this Greek word is sweets and delicacies which are eaten at the end of a meal. Some explain the expression "Afi Koman"

Afikoman

After the meal, each person takes a piece of the matzah that was hidden away for the Afikoman. One must eat the volume of an olive. The Afikoman is eaten while reclining to the left.

Bircat Ha-Mazon

We pour the third cup of wine and (before drinking it) recite the Bircat Ha-Mazon:

A song of ascents. When Hashem brings the exiles back to Zion, we will be like dreamers. Now, our mouth is filled

————— Commentary —————

to mean "To the pleasures!" which they would call out at the end of a drinking party in order to invite friends to the party's continuation in the street. It is not this way among us – the holy ones of Israel. There is not even a word like this in Hebrew. We therefore are required to use it from a foreign language.

Afikoman – Part 2

When Rabbi Yehonatan Eibeschitz was a young boy, he took the Afikoman, as is the custom, and hid it. When the time arrived to eat it, his father – Rabbi Natan Neta – went to take it. He did not find it. He understood that his son took it and he demanded that his son return it. The child said: And what will you give me for it? His father responded: What do you want? The child said: I want you to buy me a new suit. Rabbi Natan Neta claimed that this was too large of a demand, but when he saw that the child stood his ground, and the latest time for eating the Afikoman was approaching, he agreed to the condition. But after his son returned the Afikoman, his father tried to cancel the deal and said: If you do not forgo the

שְׁחוֹק פָּיְנוּ וּלְשׁוֹנֵינוּ רָנָה אֵז יֹאמְרוּ בַּגּוֹיִם הַגְּדִיל יְהוּה
 לַעֲשׂוֹת עִם אֱלֹהֵי: הַגְּדִיל יְהוּה לַעֲשׂוֹת עִמָּנוּ הֵינּוּ
 שְׂמֵחִים: שׁוֹבָה יְהוּה אֶת שְׁבִיתָנוּ כַּאֲפִיקִים בַּנֶּגֶב:
 הַזְרָעִים בְּדַמְעָה בְּרָנָה יִקְצְרוּ: הַלֶּחֶם יֵלֵךְ וּבָכָה נִשְׂא
 מִשֶּׁדֶּה הַזָּרַע בֹּא יְבֹא בְּרָנָה נִשְׂא אֶלְמֹתָיו:

המזמון: רבותי נברך

המסובין: יהי שם יי מברך מעתה ועד עולם.

המזמון: יהי שם יי מברך מעתה ועד עולם.

ברשות מרנו ורבנו ורבותי,

נברך (אלהינו) שאכלנו משלו.

המסובין: ברוך (אלהינו) שאכלנו משלו ובטובו חיינו.

המזמון: ברוך (אלהינו) שאכלנו משלו ובטובו חיינו.

ברוך הוא וברוך שמו:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוּה, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הִזָּן אֶת
 הָעוֹלָם כֻּלּוֹ בְּטוֹבוֹ בְּחֵן בְּחֶסֶד וּבְרַחֲמִים הוּא
 נוֹתֵן לָחֶם לְכֹל בֶּשֶׂר כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶד. וּבְטוֹבוֹ הַגְּדוֹל
 תִּמְיֵד לֹא חָסַר לָנוּ, וְאֵל יַחֲסֵר לָנוּ מִזֶּזֶן לְעוֹלָם וָעֵד.
 בְּעֵבוֹר שְׁמוֹ הַגְּדוֹל, כִּי הוּא אֵל זָן וּמַפְרִיֵּס לְכֹל
 וּמַטִּיב לְכֹל, וּמַכִּין מִזֶּזֶן לְכֹל בְּרִיּוֹתָיו אֲשֶׁר בָּרָא.
 (כְּאִמּוֹר: פּוֹתַח אֶת יָדָיךְ וּמִשְׁבִּיעַ לְכֹל חַי רְצוֹן.) בְּרוּךְ
 אַתָּה יְהוּה, הִזָּן אֶת הַכֹּל:

————— Commentary —————

promise which I made to you, I will not give you a piece of the Afikoman and you will not be able to fulfill the mitzvah. The child did not panic. He pulled a piece of matzah out of his pocket, and said: Dad, I knew that you would not want to give me a piece of the Afikoman, I therefore kept a piece.

with laughter, and our tongue with song. It was said then among the nations, "Hashem has done great things with these people." Hashem has done great things for us, and we rejoice. We should return from our captivity, Hashem, like streams gushing through the Negev. Those who sow in tears shall reap in joy. One goes out weeping when burdened with the full measure of seeds. He shall surely come in joy, bearing his harvested sheaves.

When the Bircat Ha-Mazon is recited with three or more males over the age of 13, the leader begins:

Gentlemen, let us bless!

The others respond: May the Name of Hashem be blessed now and forever.

The leader says: May the Name of Hashem be blessed now and forever. With the permission of the masters, teachers and gentlemen, let us bless (If there are ten or more males over the age of 13, add: our G-d) He of whose bounty we have eaten.

The others respond: Blessed be He (If there are ten or more males over the age of 13, add: our G-d) of whose bounty we have eaten.

The leader says: Blessed be He (If there are ten or more males over the age of 13, add: our G-d) of whose bounty we have eaten. Blessed is He and blessed is His Name.

Blessed are You, Hashem our G-d, King of the Universe, who in His goodness feeds the whole world with grace, with kindness and with mercy. He gives food to all flesh, for His kindness is everlasting. Through His great goodness to us we do not lack food, and may we never lack it, for the sake of His great Name. For He is a [benevolent] G-d who feeds and sustains all, does good to all, and prepares food for all His creatures whom He has created, as it is said: You open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing. Blessed are You Hashem, who provides food for all.

נוֹדָה לָךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ עַל שֶׁהִנְחַלְתָּ לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ, אֶרֶץ
 חֲמֻדָּה טוֹבָה וְרַחֲבָה, וְעַל שֶׁהוֹצֵאתָנוּ יְהוָה
 אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם, וּפְדִיתָנוּ מִבַּיִת עֲבָדִים, וְעַל
 בְּרִיתְךָ שֶׁחֲתַמְתָּ בְּבִשְׁרָנוּ, וְעַל תּוֹרַתְךָ שֶׁלְּמַדְתָּנוּ, וְעַל
 חֻקֶּיךָ שֶׁהוֹדַעְתָּנוּ וְעַל חַיִּים חַן וְחֶסֶד שֶׁחֹנְנֵתָנוּ, וְעַל
 אֲכִילַת מַזֶּזֶן שֶׁאַתָּה זֶן וּמִפְרֵנֶס אוֹתָנוּ תָּמִיד, בְּכָל יוֹם
 וּבְכָל עֵת וּבְכָל שָׁעָה:

וְעַל הַכֹּל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֲנַחְנוּ מוֹדִים לָךְ, וּמְבָרְכִים
 אוֹתְךָ, יִתְבָּרַךְ שְׁמֹךְ בְּפִי כָל חַי תָּמִיד לְעוֹלָם
 וָעֵד. כִּפְתּוּב, וְאֲכַלְתָּ וְשִׁבַּעְתָּ, וּבִרְכַתְּ אֵת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ
 עַל הָאָרֶץ הַטֹּבָה אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לָךְ. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, עַל
 הָאָרֶץ וְעַל הַמַּזֶּזֶן:

רַחֵם נָא יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ, עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל עַמֶּךָ, וְעַל
 יְרוּשָׁלַיִם עִירְךָ, וְעַל צִיּוֹן מְשֻׁכָּן כְּבוֹדְךָ, וְעַל
 מַלְכוּת בֵּית דָּוִד מְשִׁיחֶךָ, וְעַל הַבַּיִת הַגָּדוֹל וְהַקְּדוֹשׁ
 שֶׁנִּקְרָא שְׁמֹךְ עָלָיו. אֱלֹהֵינוּ, אָבִינוּ, רַעְנוּ, זִוְנֵנוּ,
 פְּרַנְסֵנוּ, וְכַלְכַּלְנוּ, וְהַרְוִיחֵנוּ, וְהַרְוֵנוּ לָנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ
 מִהֲרָה מְכַל צְרוּתֵינוּ, וְנָא, אֵל תִּצְרִיכֵנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ,
 לֹא לַיְדֵי מִתְנַת בְּשָׂר וָדָם, וְלֹא לַיְדֵי הַלּוֹאֲתָם. כִּי אִם
 לַיְדֵי הַמְּלָאָה, הַפְּתוּחָה, הַקְּדוּשָׁה וְהַרְחֲבָה, שֶׁלֹּא
 נִבּוֹשׁ וְלֹא נִכָּלֵם לְעוֹלָם וָעֵד:

We thank You, Hashem, our G-d, for having given as a heritage to our fathers a precious, good and spacious land; for having brought us out, Hashem our G-d, from the land of Egypt and redeemed us from the house of slaves; for Your covenant which You have sealed in our flesh; for Your Torah which You have taught us; for Your statutes which You have made known to us; for the life, favor and kindness which You have graciously bestowed upon us; and for the food we eat, with which You constantly feed and sustain us every day, at all times, and at every hour.

For all this, Hashem our G-d, we thank You and bless You. May Your Name be blessed by the mouth of every living being, constantly and forever. As it is written: When you have eaten and are satiated, you shall bless Hashem your G-d, for the good land which He has given you. Blessed are You, Hashem, for the land and for the food.

Have mercy, Hashem our G-d, upon Israel Your people, upon Jerusalem Your city, upon Zion the abode of Your glory, upon the kingship of the house of David Your anointed, and upon the great and holy House which is called by Your Name. Our G-d, our Father, our Shepherd, feed us, sustain us, nourish us and give us comfort; and speedily, Hashem our G-d, grant us relief from all of our afflictions. Hashem, our G-d, please do not make us dependent upon the gifts of mortal men nor upon their loans, but only upon Your full, open, holy and generous hand, that we may not be shamed or disgraced forever and ever.

(לשבת רצה והחליצנו יהוה אלהינו במצותיך
 ובמצות יום השביעי השבת הגדול
 והקדוש הזה. כי יום זה גדול וקדוש הוא לפניך,
 לשבת בו ולנוח בו באהבה כמצות רצונך וברצונך
 הניח לנו יהוה אלהינו, שלא תהא צרה ויגון ואנחה
 ביום מנוחתנו. והראנו יהוה אלהינו בנחמת ציון
 עירך, ובבנין ירושלים עיר קדשך, כי אתה הוא בעל
 הישועות ובעל הנחמות.)

**אלהינו ואלהי אבותינו, יעלה ויבא ויגיע,
 ויראה, וירצה, וישמע, ויפקד, ויזכר
 זכרוננו ופקדוננו, וזכרון אבותינו, וזכרון משיח
 בן דוד עבדך, וזכרון ירושלים עיר קדשך, וזכרון
 כל עמך בית ישראל לפניך לפליטה לטובה לחן
 ולחסד ולרחמים, לחיים (טובים) ולשלום ביום
 חג המצות הזה. זכרנו יהוה אלהינו בו לטובה.
 ופקדנו בו לברכה. והושיענו בו לחיים טובים,
 ובדבר ישועה ורחמים, חוס וחנו, ורחם עלינו
 והושיענו, כי אליך עינינו, כי אל מלך חנון ורחום
 אתה:**

On Shabbat add:

May it please You, Hashem, our G-d, to strengthen us through Your commandments, and through the precept of the Seventh Day, this great and holy Shabbat. For this day is great and holy before You, to refrain from work and to rest therein with love, in accordance with the commandment of Your will. In Your will, Hashem, our G-d, bestow upon us tranquility, that there shall be no trouble, sadness or grief on the day of our rest. Hashem, our G-d, let us see the consolation of Zion Your city, and the rebuilding of Jerusalem Your holy city, for You are the Master of [all] salvations and the Master of [all] consolations.

Our G-d and G-d of our fathers, may there ascend, come and reach, be seen and accepted, heard, recalled and remembered before You, the remembrance and recollection of us, the remembrance of our fathers, the remembrance of the Messiah the son of David Your servant, the remembrance of Jerusalem Your holy city, and the remembrance of all Your people the House of Israel, for deliverance, well-being, grace, kindness, mercy, good life and peace, on this day of the **Festival of Matzot**, on this Festival of holy convocation. Remember us on this [day], Hashem, our G-d, for good; recollect us on this [day] for blessing; help us on this [day] for good life. With the promise of deliverance and compassion, spare us and be gracious to us; have mercy upon us and deliver us; for our eyes are directed towards You, for You, G-d, are a gracious and merciful King.

וּבְנֵה יְרוּשָׁלַיִם עִיר הַקֹּדֶשׁ בְּמַהֲרָה בְיָמֵינוּ.
 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, בּוֹנֵה בְרַחֲמָיו
 יְרוּשָׁלַיִם. אָמֵן.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִלֶּךְ הָעוֹלָם, הָאֵל אֲבֵינוּ,
 מִלְכֵנוּ, אֲדִירֵנוּ בּוֹרְאֵנוּ, גּוֹאֲלֵנוּ, יּוֹצְרֵנוּ,
 קְדוֹשֵׁנוּ קְדוֹשׁ יַעֲקֹב, רוֹעֵנוּ רוֹעֵה יִשְׂרָאֵל. הַמֶּלֶךְ
 הַטּוֹב, וְהַמְטִיב לְכָל, שֶׁבְכָל יוֹם וַיּוֹם הוּא הַטֵּיב, הוּא
 מְטִיב, הוּא יֵיטִיב לָנוּ. הוּא גִמְלָנוּ, הוּא גּוֹמְלָנוּ, הוּא
 יְגַמְלָנוּ לְעַד לַחַן וּלְחֶסֶד וּלְרַחֲמִים וּלְרוּחַ הַצְּלָה
 וְהַצְּלָחָה בְּרָכָה וַיְשׁוּעָה, נְחֻמָּה, פְּרִנְסָה וְכִלְכֻּלָּה,
 וְרַחֲמִים, וְחַיִּים וְשָׁלוֹם, וְכָל טוֹב, וּמְכַל טוֹב לְעוֹלָם
 אֵל יַחְסְרָנוּ:

הַרְחָמֵנוּ, הוּא יְמַלֹּךְ עָלֵינוּ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

הַרְחָמֵנוּ, הוּא יִתְבַּרֵךְ בְּשָׁמַיִם וּבָאָרֶץ.

הַרְחָמֵנוּ, הוּא יִשְׁתַּבַּח לְדוֹר דְּוָרִים, וַיִּתְפָּאֵר בְּנוֹ לְעַד
 וּלְנִצַּח נְצָחִים, וַיִּתְהַדָּר בְּנוֹ לְעַד וּלְעוֹלָמֵי
 עוֹלָמִים.

הַרְחָמֵנוּ, הוּא יַפְרִנְסֵנוּ בְּכָבוֹד.

הַרְחָמֵנוּ, הוּא יִשְׁבּוֹר עָלֵנוּ מֵעַל צוֹאֲרָנוּ וְהוּא יוֹלִיכֵנוּ
 קוֹמָמִיּוֹת לְאֶרְצָנוּ.

הַרְחָמֵנוּ, הוּא יִשְׁלַח לָנוּ בְּרָכָה מְרֵבָה בְּבֵית הַזֶּה, וְעַל
 שְׁלַחוֹ זֶה שְׂאֲכָלֵנוּ עָלָיו.

Rebuild Jerusalem the Holy City speedily in our days.
Blessed are You, Hashem, who in His mercy
rebuilds Jerusalem. Amen.

Blessed are You, Hashem, our G-d, King of the
universe, benevolent G-d, our Father, our
King, our Might, our Creator, our Redeemer, our Maker,
our Holy One, the Holy One of Yaakov, our Shepherd,
the Shepherd of Israel, the King who is good and does
good to all, each and every day. He has done good for
us, He does good for us, and He will do good for us; He
has bestowed, He bestows, and He will forever bestow
upon us grace, kindness and mercy, relief, salvation and
success, blessing and help, consolation, sustenance and
nourishment, compassion, life, peace and all goodness;
and may He never cause us to lack any good.

May the Merciful One reign over us forever and ever.

May the Merciful One be blessed in heaven and on
earth.

May the Merciful One be praised for all generations, and
be glorified in us forever and all eternity, and
honored in us forever and ever.

May the Merciful One sustain us with honor.

May the Merciful One break the yoke of exile from our
necks and may He lead us upright to our Land.

May the Merciful One send abundant blessings into this
house and upon this table at which we have eaten.

הַרְחֲמֵנוּ, הוּא יִשְׁלַח לָנוּ אֶת אֱלֹהֵינוּ הַנְּבִיא זְכוּר לְטוֹב,
וַיִּבְשֹׁר לָנוּ בְּשׂוֹרוֹת טוֹבוֹת יְשׁוּעוֹת וְנַחֲמוֹת.

הַרְחֲמֵנוּ, הוּא יְבָרֵךְ אֶת (אָבִי מוֹרִי) בְּעַל הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה,
וְאֶת (אֲמִי מוֹרְתִי) בְּעַלֹּת הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה, אוֹתָם
וְאֶת בֵּיתָם וְאֶת זְרַעָם וְאֶת כָּל אֲשֶׁר לָהֶם,

(ואם סמוך על שלחן עצמו יאמר: **הַרְחֲמֵנוּ**, הוּא יְבָרֵךְ אוֹתִי
(וְאָבִי וְאֲמִי) וְאֶשְׁתִּי וְאֶת זְרַעִי וְאֶת כָּל אֲשֶׁר לִי)

אוֹתָנוּ וְאֶת כָּל אֲשֶׁר לָנוּ, כְּמוֹ שֶׁנִּתְבָּרְכוּ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ,
אֲבָרְהָם יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב: בְּכָל, מְכָל, כָּל. כֵּן יְבָרֵךְ אוֹתָנוּ
כָּלֵנוּ יַחַד. בְּבִרְכָה שְׁלֵמָה, וְנֹאמַר אָמֵן:

בְּמָרוֹם יִלְמְדוּ עֲלֵיהֶם וְעֲלֵינוּ זְכוֹת, שֶׁתִּהְיֶה לְמִשְׁמֶרֶת
שְׁלוֹם, וְנִשְׂא בְּרָכָה מֵאֵת יְהוָה וְצִדְקָה מֵאֱלֹהֵי
יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְנִמְצָא חַן וְשִׂכָּל טוֹב בְּעֵינֵי אֱלֹהִים וְאָדָם:

(לשבת הַרְחֲמֵנוּ, הוּא יִנְחִילָנוּ יוֹם שְׁכָלוֹ שֶׁבֶת וּמְנוּחָה
לְחַיֵּי הָעוֹלָמִים.)

הַרְחֲמֵנוּ, הוּא יִנְחִילָנוּ יוֹם שְׁכָלוֹ טוֹב. יוֹם שְׁכָלוֹ אַרְוֵךְ,
יוֹם שְׁצַדִּיקִים יוֹשְׁבִים וְעֵטְרוֹתֵיהֶם בְּרֹאשֵׁיהֶם,
וְנִהְגִים מִזִּיו הַשְּׂכִינָה.

הַרְחֲמֵנוּ, הוּא יִזְכֵּנוּ לִימֹת הַמְּשִׁיחַ וְלְחַיֵּי הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא.

May the Merciful One send us Eliyahu the Prophet, may he be remembered for good, and may he bring us good tidings, salvation and consolation.

May the Merciful One bless the master of this house (my father, my teacher) and the mistress of this house (my mother, my teacher); them, their household, their children, and all that is theirs; us, and all that is ours. Just as He blessed our forefathers, Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov, in everything, from everything, with everything, so may He bless all of us together with a perfect blessing.
And let us say, Amen.

From On High, may there be invoked upon them and upon us such merit which will bring a safeguarding of peace. May we receive blessing from Hashem and just kindness from the G-d of our salvation, and may we find grace and good understanding in the eyes of G-d and man.

On Shabbat add: May the Merciful One cause us to inherit that day which will be all Shabbat and rest for life everlasting.

May the Merciful One cause us to inherit that day which is all good, a day that is entirely long, a day when the righteous will sit with their crowns on their heads, basking in the radiance of the Divine Presence, and may our portion be with them.

May the Merciful One grant us the privilege of reaching the days of the Messiah and the life of the World to Come.

מַגְדִּיל יְשׁוּעוֹת מַלְכוֹ, וְעֹשֶׂה חֶסֶד לְמַשִּׁיחוֹ לְדָוִד
 וְלִזְרָעוֹ עַד עוֹלָם: עֹשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמִרוֹמָיו, הוּא
 יַעֲשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ, וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן:

יִרְאוּ אֶת יְהוָה קְדָשׁוֹ, כִּי אֵין מַחְסוֹר לִירְאָיו:
 כְּפִירִים רָשׁוּ וְרָעִבוּ, וְדוֹרְשֵׁי יְהוָה לֹא יַחְסְרוּ
 כָּל טוֹב: הוֹדוּ לַיהוָה כִּי טוֹב, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶדוֹ: פּוֹתַח
 אֶת יַדָּהּ, וּמִשְׁבִּיעַ לְכָל חַי רְצוֹן: בְּרוּךְ הַגִּבּוֹר אֲשֶׁר
 יִבְטַח בֵּיהוָה, וְהָיָה יְהוָה מְבֹטָחוֹ: נָעַר הַיִּיתִי גַם
 זָקְנִתִי וְלֹא רָאִיתִי צָדִיק נֶעְזָב, וְזָרְעוֹ מִבְּקֵשׁ לֶחֶם:
 יְהוָה עִז לְעַמּוֹ יִתֵּן, יְהוָה יְבָרֵךְ אֶת עַמּוֹ בְּשְׁלוֹם:

————— Commentary —————

Magdil, Migdol

The same verse appears twice in the Tanach with a minor change. The Book of Tehillim (18:51) says "Magdil" (meaning "He magnifies [magdil] the salvation of His King [David]"), and we recite this on weekdays. The Book of Shmuel (2 22:51) says "Migdol" (meaning "He is a tower [migdol] of salvation to His King"), and we recite this on Shabbat and holidays.

Our Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah, explains that this is the difference between prophecy and the divine spirit. The same word of Hashem was revealed to King David in two ways: Once by divine spirit as we find in Tehillim, and once through prophecy, which is much greater, as we find in the Book of Shmuel. The same expression of the resting of the Divine Presence appears in a "divine spirit" version and in a prophetic version. Our Sages teach that there is a difference between "To David, a Psalm" and "A Psalm of David": "To David, a Psalm" teaches that first the Divine Presence rested on him and then he recited that song; 'A Psalm of David' teaches that he first

He is a tower of salvation to His king, and bestows kindness upon His anointed, to David and his descendants forever. He who makes peace in His heights, may He make peace for us and for all Israel. And let us say, Amen.

Fear Hashem, you His holy ones, for those who fear Him suffer no want. Young lions are in need and go hungry, but those who seek Hashem shall not lack any good. Give thanks to Hashem for He is good, for His kindness is everlasting. You open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing. Blessed is the man who trusts in Hashem, and Hashem will be his trust.

————— Commentary —————

recited the Psalm and only then the Divine Presence rested on him" (Pesachim 117a). At times he began to sing and the Divine Presence rested on his song. This is the divine spirit. At other times, the Divine Presence rested on him, and, on account of this, he began to sing. This is prophecy. There is therefore an ancient tradition that on days when there is greater holiness to recite the verse from the Prophets (the Book of Shmuel) which says "Migdol," which is heavenly and more supreme.

The word "Magdil" applies to active building. Hashem "magnifies the salvation," i.e. He, the Creator and Master actively performs the salvation. The word "Migdol" from the phrase "He is a tower of salvation" implies a spiritual level as it emphasizes the essence of the salvation, as in the verse, "The Name of Hashem is a strong tower, the righteous run into it and are safe" (Mishlei 18:10). The Name of Hashem is the tower, the essence of the salvation (Sichot Rabbenu, Bereshit, pp. 154-155).

כוס שלישי

הַנְּנִי מוֹכֵן וּמְזוּמֵן לְקַיֵּם מִצְוֹת כּוֹס שְׁלִישִׁי מֵאַרְבַּע כּוֹסוֹת: לְשֵׁם יְחִוּד קוֹדֶשׁא בְּרִידָה הוּא וְשְׂכִינְתָּיה בְּדַחֲלוֹ וּרְחִימוּ לְיַחַד שֵׁם י"ה בּו"ה בְּיַחְוּדָא שְׁלִים עַל יְדֵי הַהוּא טְמִיר וְנֶעְלַם בְּשֵׁם כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל. וַיְהִי נֶעַם אֲדָנִי אֱלֹהֵינוּ עֲלֵינוּ, וּמַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵינוּ כּוֹנֵנָה עֲלֵינוּ, וּמַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵינוּ כּוֹנֵנָהוּ:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן:

————— Commentary —————

Cup of Eliyahu

Question: Why do we have the Cup of Eliyahu?

Answer:

1. The Sefer Ha-Minhag wrote: "I found a custom in various communities that they do not lock the room in which they sleep on the night of the Seder because we were redeemed in Nissan and we will be redeemed in the future in Nissan, as it is written: 'A night of guarding, the guarded night from the Six Days of Creation.' If Eliyahu comes and finds an open door, and we quickly go out to greet him and we believe in this...and in these countries they customarily pour one more cup beyond those ones which are drunk reclining and they call it the Cup of Eliyahu the Prophet."

2. It says in the Gemara: "One recites Hallel over the fourth cup and recites the Great Hallel, these are the words of Rabbi Tarfon" (Pesachim 118a). This is the version of Rashi, Rashbam and Tosafot. But the Gaonim, Rabbenu Chananel, Rif, Rambam and Rosh have the version: The fifth cup. It says in the Shulchan Aruch: "After the fourth cup it is not permitted to drink wine but

Third Cup

Blessed are You, Hashem, our G-d, King of the Universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.

Drink the third cup of wine while reclining to the left.

Pour out Your wrath

Pour the cup of Eliyahu. The front door is opened to symbolize that this is a "Leil Shimurim," a guarded night, on which no harm may befall us.

————— Commentary —————

only water" (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 481:1), and in the Rama: "And one who is delicate or desires much may drink a fifth cup" (ibid.). There are those who explain that this is a dispute between the authorities, and laws which are cast in doubt will eventually be explained by Eliyahu the Prophet (Mishnah Eduyot 8:7), and we usually explain that the talmudic conclusion "teyku" ("undecided" - at the end of an argument) is an acronym of "Tishbi Yetaretz Kusheyot U-va'ayot - [Eliyahu] the Tishbi will resolve all difficulties and problems" (Tosafot Yom Tov ibid. and Shelah, chelek Torah She-be-al-peh). We therefore refer to the fifth cup which we pour (which we do not know if we are obligated to drink) with the name "Cup of Eliyahu," since Eliyahu will decide the fate of this cup in the future (in the name of Ha-hafla'ah and the Vilna Gaon).

3. The Ra'avad wrote that the four cups correspond to the four expressions of redemption (Shemot 6:6-9), "I will bring, I will save, I will redeem, I will take," and the fifth cup corresponds to "I will bring [you to the Land of Israel]" (Orchot Chaim Leil Pessach, p. 79 and Tamim Dei'im #30).

שֶׁפֶדְךָ חֶמְתְּךָ אֶל־הַגּוֹיִם, אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִדְעוּךָ וְעַל־מַמְלָכוֹת אֲשֶׁר בְּשִׁמְךָ לֹא

————— Commentary —————

4. Rav Sherira Gaon wrote that the four cups correspond to the four Exiles, and the fifth corresponds to the Redemption (Ma'aseh Roke'ach).

5. Rabbenu Yoel: I will bring, I will save, I will redeem, I will take, I will bring, five Redemptions are written here, corresponding to the five Kingdoms which enslave Israel; Babylonia, Medai, Greece, Edom, and Gog and Magog (Manuscript brought in Haggadah Sheleimah, pg. 177).

6. The Levush: the fifth cup corresponds to the overflowing cup of the future Redemption (Orach Chaim 481). This cup of Eliyahu announces the future Redemption. The Maharal of Prague had the custom to drink the fifth cup without a blessing, and various great Rabbis and tzaddikim (righteous individuals) acted this way after him. And thus is printed in the Haggadah of the Maharal with the commentary "Lashon Limudim - Divrei Negidim": "Behold I am prepared and ready to fulfill the mitzvah of the fifth cup which corresponds to the announcing of the Redemption which The Holy One, blessed be He, said to Israel (Shemot 6:9), 'I will bring you to the Land which I raised My hand to give it to Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov; and I will give it to you as a possession (heritage) - I am Hashem.' The head of the household alone should take the Cup of Eliyahu the Prophet and drink in a reclining position without reciting [an additional] blessing and afterwards recite the after blessing."

Questions

1. Why do we eat two olive-sized pieces of matzah the first time we eat matzah at the Seder?

Pour out Your wrath upon the nations that do not acknowledge You, and upon the kingdoms that do not call upon Your Name. For they have devoured

————— Commentary —————

2. Why is the mitzvah of eating maror a Rabbinic mitzvah when the Torah says, "and eat it with matzah and maror" (Bamidbar 9:11)?
3. Why don't we recline when we eat maror?
4. What two Greek words combine to make up "Afikoman"?
5. Why do children "steal" the matzah?
6. What is the difference between birkat ha-mazon (blessing after eating) at the Seder and the birkat ha-mazon during the rest of the year?
7. Where is Yehoshua mentioned in the Haggadah?
8. Where is King David mentioned?
9. How many times is Rabbi Akiva mentioned in the Haggadah?
10. Where is the Messiah mentioned?

Answers: 1. We eat a piece from the full matzah over the "two loaves" like every Shabbat and holiday upon which we recite "ha-motzi" and a piece from the broken matzah, the poor person's bread, upon which we recite "al achilat matzah." 2. It is only a Torah mitzvah when eaten with the Pesach sacrifice. 3. Because it is a remembrance of slavery. 4. It is a combination of two words "afiko" and "man" which mean "bring out types of sweets" (see Rashbam to Pesachim 119b). 5. Some explain that it is so that the children will not fall asleep. 6. We recite the birkat ha-mazon at the Seder on a cup of wine even if there were not three men (zimun) and we say a special "Ha-Rachaman." 7. At first our ancestors were idol worshippers...as it says: "Yehoshua said..." 8. At the end of Hallel – "Praises of David ben Yishai." 9. Two times: Five Sages in Bnei Brak and his explanation of the 250 plagues. 10. Rabbi Elazar ben Azariyah said...to include the time of the Messiah.

Pour out Your wrath

The Rabbis of the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp composed this prayer: "Before eating chametz, one should recite with intention of the heart: Our Father in Heaven, it is revealed and known before

קִרְאוּ: כִּי אֶכֶל אֶת־יַעֲקֹב. וְאֶת־נוֹהוּ הַשָּׁמוּ:
 שֶׁפָּדְ-עֲלֵיהֶם זַעֲמָךְ, וְחֵרוֹן אֶפְךָ יִשְׂיגֶם:
 תִּרְדֹּף בְּאֵף וְתִשְׁמְדֵם, מִתַּחַת שָׁמַי יי:

————— Commentary —————

You that our will is to perform Your will and to celebrate the holiday of Pesach by eating matzah and to observe the prohibition of chametz, and our heart pines for this, but the enslavement prevents us and we are in a state of danger to our lives. We are ready and prepared to fulfill Your mitzvah 'Live by them (the mitzvot) and do not die by them,' and to observe Your warning 'You shall beware and guard your soul exceedingly.' Our prayer to you is therefore that we should live, exist, and be redeemed speedily to observe Your law, and to perform Your will and to serve You with a full heart. Amen" (from Osef Beit Lochamei Ha-Geta'ot – the collection of the Ghetto Fighters' House).

Our revered teacher, Rav Kook, writes: "The blood which was shed in the Land will only be atoned by the blood of those who shed it, and the atonement must come: Total nullification of all of the foundations of contemporary civilization, with all of their lies and deception, with all of their evil filth and its poisonous venom. The entire civilization that rings false must be destroyed from the world...and Israel will see with its eyes the destruction of the wicked, will step on the ruins of the new idol worshippers as it stepped on the remains of ancient Assyria and Babylonia" (Orot, Ha-Milchamah – The War, section 8).

On the twenty-fourth of Marcheshvan 5686, a huge crowd, including government officials, Rabbis and other honored people, gathered at the shul of Rabbi Yehudah Ha-Chasid in the Old City of Jerusalem to celebrate the cease-fire during World War One. After the Cantor recited Psalms, Rav Kook went before the Holy Ark to speak. They

Yaakov and laid waste his habitation. Pour out Your indignation upon them, and let the wrath of Your anger overtake them. Pursue them with anger, and destroy them from beneath the heavens of Hashem.

————— Commentary —————

heard cannon fire to signal a moment of silence, and the entire community stood in silence for two minutes. Afterwards, Ha-Rav continued with a booming voice: "We, the Nation of Israel, have kept silent not for two minutes, but for two thousand years. We are 'the great silent ones' in the chronicles of history. We are called 'The dove of silence' (Tehillim 56:1). They stole our Land from us, they plundered our cherished possession, they spilled our blood, and we always remained silent. Two thousand years of the world's suffering has passed over us – and we were silent. The world's blood was spilled because they did not return the stolen object (Eretz Yisrael) to us, because the nations did not atone for their sin. Our silence today is our protest, it is our cry: Return the stolen object to us! Return our holy object to us which were taken by force!" (Malachim Kivnei Adam by Simcha Raz, pp. 151-152).

Question: Why do we say "Pour out Your wrath" after birkat ha-mazon (blessing after eating), when we pour the fourth cup of wine?

Answer: One of the reasons given for the four cups of wine is that in the future Hashem will force the non-Jews who have oppressed us to drink four cups of retribution (Ran on Pesachim, beginning of chapter 10). Another explanation: The next Psalm of Hallel, "Lo lanu – Not us," discusses the birthpangs of the Messiah, enslavement to the kingdoms and the War of Gog and Magog (Vlina Gaon, chapter 480). Another explanation: There is a need to curse the Egyptians and their like (Or Zarua, chapter 256).

הַלֵּל

לֹא לָנוּ יְיָ לֹא לָנוּ כִּי לְשִׁמְךָ תָּנוּ כְּבוֹד, עַל חֶסֶדְךָ עַל
 אֲמִתְּךָ. לָמָּה יֹאמְרוּ הַגּוֹיִם, אֵיךְ נָא אֱלֹהֵיהֶם.
 וְאֵלֵהֵינוּ בְּשָׁמַיִם כֹּל אֲשֶׁר חָפֵץ עָשָׂה. עֲצִבֵיהֶם כָּסַף
 וְזָהַב, מַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵי אָדָם. פֶּה לָהֶם וְלֹא יִדְבְּרוּ, עֵינַיִם לָהֶם
 וְלֹא יִרְאוּ. אֲזַנָּיִם לָהֶם וְלֹא יִשְׁמְעוּ, אֵף לָהֶם וְלֹא יִרְחוּ.
 יָדֵיהֶם וְלֹא יִמְיִשּׁוּ, רַגְלֵיהֶם וְלֹא יִהְלְכוּ, לֹא יִהְיוּ
 בְּגִרוֹנִים. כְּמוֹתֵם יִהְיוּ עֲשִׂיהֶם, כֹּל אֲשֶׁר בְּטַח בָּהֶם:
 יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּטַח בְּיָי, עֲזָרָם וּמְגִנָּם הוּא. בֵּית אֶהְרֹן בְּטַחוֹ
 בְּיָי, עֲזָרָם וּמְגִנָּם הוּא. יִרְאֵי יְיָ בְּטַחוֹ בְּיָי, עֲזָרָם וּמְגִנָּם
 הוּא:

————— Commentary —————

Reciting Hallel

Question: Our Sages establish that one who says Hallel every day is a blasphemer, but one who recites "Pesukei De-Zimra" (collection of Psalms at the beginning of the davening) every day is praiseworthy (Shabbat 118b). What is the reason for this difference?

Answer: There are fixed daily patterns which lead one on the upright path. Above these is a place to offer exaltations at specified times for a unique occurrence. This is like an exceptional burst of blessing within the everyday. To have a constant state of the exceptional, however, even if it is the most beautiful state, transforms itself into a burden, a form of routine which is the opposite of exaltation. We must therefore build holy, pure, healthy, consistent lives, and have periodic, fixed, supreme impressive flashes of light (Olat Re'eiyah vol. 2, p. 294 and see *ibid.*, p. 217)

Hallel

Pour the fourth cup of wine for the recitation of Hallel

Not for us, Hashem, not for us, but for Your Name give glory, for the sake of Your kindness and Your truth. Why should the nations say, 'Where, now, is their G-d?' Our G-d is in heaven, whatever He desires, He does. Their idols are of silver and gold, the product of human hands: they have a mouth, but cannot speak; they have eyes, but cannot see; they have ears, but cannot hear; they have a nose, but cannot smell; their hands cannot feel; their feet cannot walk; they can make no sound with their throat. Like them should be their makers, [and] everyone that trusts in them. Israel, trust in Hashem! He is their help and their shield. House of Aharon, trust in Hashem! He is their help and their shield. You who fear Hashem, trust in Hashem! He is their help and their shield.

————— Commentary —————

Half Hallel on Pesach

Question: Why don't we recite the full Hallel on Chol Ha-Mo'ed Pesach and the Seventh Day of Pesach, like we do during all of Sukkot?

Answer: Our Rabbis say that it is because the Egyptians drowned in the sea on the Seventh Day of Pesach, as the verse says: "When your enemy falls, do not rejoice" (Mishlei 24:17. Pesikta De-Rav Kahana #29, Yalkut Shimoni Emor 654 and Beit Yosef, Orach Chaim 490 in the name of Shilbolei Ha-Leket #174 in the name of Midrash Harenevu). Our Sages also explain the verse, "and one did not come close to the other the entire night" (Shemot 14:20), that the angels did not draw close to each other contrary to their

יִזְכְּרוּנוּ יְבָרְךָ, יְבָרְךָ אֶת בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל, יְבָרְךָ אֶת בֵּית
 אֱהֲרֹן. יְבָרְךָ יְרֵאֵי יְיָ, הַקְּטָנִים עִם הַגְּדֹלִים. יִסֹּף יְיָ
 עֲלֵיכֶם, עֲלֵיכֶם וְעַל בְּנֵיכֶם. בְּרוּכִים אַתֶּם לַיְיָ, עֲשֵׂה

————— Commentary —————

manner, "and call to one another and say" (see Yeshayahu 6:3). "At that moment, the ministering angels wanted to sing a song before The Holy One, blessed be He. The Holy One, blessed be He said to them: My handiwork is drowning in the sea and you are a singing a song before me" (Sanhedrin 39b).

Based on this, there are those who learn that one should not rejoice when the enemies of Israel fall. We cannot, however, learn a general principle from here. First of all, this reason for not reciting the full Hallel on Pesach is not the main reason. The Gemara in Arachin says that we do not recite a full Hallel since the days are not distinguished by their sacrifices like on Sukkot (Arachin 10b). On each day of Sukkot there are a different number of sacrifices, and each day is therefore considered unique, unlike Pesach, on which the sacrifices are identical in number each day. The "Chavot Ya'ir" has already written that the reason "when your enemy falls, do not rejoice" is extremely weak and is not the essential reason (Shut Chavot Ya'ir #225). Furthermore, on the remaining days of Pesach we do not completely cancel reciting Hallel ("the singing"), but simply omit two Psalms.

When the Master of the Universe prevented the angels from singing, this was unrelated to us. We are not angels. We are only human beings, and the Torah was not given to angels. The angels reside in heaven and do not suffer, and were not forced to perform backbreaking work and have their children thrown into the sea. They therefore have no problem with not singing.

Ha-Gaon Rav Kalonymus Kalman Shapira, the Admor of Pisetzna, may his blood be avenged, similarly wrote in the Warsaw Ghetto

Hashem, mindful of us, will bless. He will bless the House of Israel; He will bless the House of Aharon; He will bless those who fear Hashem, the small with the great. May Hashem increase [blessing] upon you,

————— Commentary —————

in 5700, "And this one's heart breaks for this one's distress...and the crying out comes from the midst of distress and pain, and the angels also mercifully cry out over the distress of Israel...The angels do not say it out of [their own] distress, for had the angels already tasted the distress of Israel at the moment of being struck, or its shame at the moment they pursued it or shamed it, or its fear or its affliction at the moment when it had no food, G-d forbid" (Aish Kodesh, p. 28). Since we are the ones who suffer, we are the ones who sing.

Indeed the next morning, after the splitting of the Red Sea, "Then Moshe and the Children of Israel will sing this song to Hashem." Furthermore, the angels themselves also sang then, as our Sages explain the verse: "The singer precedes, the musicians follow" (Tehillim 68:26): "The angels wanted to sing before The Holy One, blessed be He the night when Israel passed through the sea, but The Holy One did not allow them. He said to them: My legions [= the Children of Israel] are in distress and you are singing before me? As it is written: "And one did not come close to the other the entire night," [contrary to their usual way,] as it is written, "and call to one another and say." When Israel came out of the sea, the angels went first, singing before The Holy One, blessed be He, Who said: Let my children precede, as it is written: "Then Moshe will sing." It does not say, 'Then he sang,' but 'Then he will sing,' because The Holy One said: Moshe and the Children of Israel will sing first" (Shemot Rabbah 23:8 on the verse "Then Moshe will sing"). In any event, the Children of Israel themselves sang, and this is not the same as the angels who do not live in the lower world with its complications and suffering.

שְׂמִיּוֹת וְאֶרֶץ. הַשָּׁמַיִם שְׂמִיּוֹת לִי, וְהָאָרֶץ נָתַן לְבַנֵּי אָדָם.
 לֹא הִמְתִּים יְהוָה לְלוֹי יְהוָה, וְלֹא כָּל יְרֵדֵי דוֹמָה. וְאַנְחָנוּ נְבָרְדָּךְ
 יְהוָה, מֵעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם, הַלְלוּיָהּ:

————— Commentary —————

It says in Mishlei: "'There is joy when the wicked perish' (Mishlei 11:10). We frighten the witnesses in capital cases so that they will tell the truth, on account of this awesome responsibility. "Perhaps you will say: Why should we enter this matter (to enter our heads in this concern, even if it is for the truth – Rashi)? It is written: 'If he saw or he knew – if he does not say, he will bear his sin' (Vayikra 5:1) [You will bear the sin if you do not testify over what you saw – Rashi]. And perhaps you will say: Why should we be liable for his blood [We would rather remain in 'if he does not say' – Rashi]? It already says: 'There is joy when the wicked perish'" (Mishnah Sanhedrin 37a-b).

The Gemara explains: "'And joy went through the camp' (after Achav's death. Melachim 1 22:36). Rabbi Abba bar Chanina said: There is joy when the wicked perish; there is joy when Achav ben Omri perished. Is The Holy One, blessed be He, happy with the downfall of the wicked? Isn't it written: 'When they went before the army, they should say thanks to Hashem for His kindness is everlasting' (When Yehoshfat went out to wage war with the Amonim who were coming towards him - Divrei Ha-Yamim 2 20:21). Rabbi Yochanan said: Why doesn't it say 'for goodness' in this gratitude? Because The Holy One blessed be He is not happy with the downfall of the wicked, as Rabbi Shmuel bar Nachman said in the name of Rabbi Yochanan: Why is it written, 'and one did not come close to the other the entire night.' At that moment, the ministering angels wanted to sing a song before The Holy One blessed be He; but He said to them: My handiwork is drowning in the sea and you are a singing a song before me?! Rabbi Yosi bar Chanina: Hashem does not rejoice, but He causes others to rejoice (Sanhedrin 39b). Hashem

upon you and upon your children. You are blessed unto Hashem, the Maker of heaven and earth. The heavens are the heavens of Hashem, but the earth He gave to the children of man. The dead do not praise G-d, nor do those that go down into the silence [of the grave]. But we will bless G-d, from now to eternity. Halleluyah.

————— Commentary —————

Himself does not rejoice when His creations are destroyed instead of repenting, "because He does not desire the death of the wicked but He waits for him until the day of his death. If he repents, He immediately accepts him." We, however, rejoice and are happy. We thank and praise Hashem.

There is an innovative explanation in the name of the Vilna Gaon on the phrase "My handiwork is drowning." On the verse: "And the angel of Hashem went out and struck the camp of Ashur" (Yeshayahu 37:36), when the army of Sanchariv attacked Jerusalem in the days of Chizkiyahu the King of Yehudah, our Sages say: "With what did he strike them...? Hashem uncovered their ears and they heard the song of Chayos (a type of angel)" (Sanhedrin 95b). Therefore, when the Egyptians pursued the Children of Israel to kill them, a decree went before Hashem to pay them back. The angels wanted to sing in order to kill them with the same death as the army of Sanchariv. The Holy One blessed be He said: "My handiwork is drowning in the sea," the Children of Israel were drowned in the sea [the Nile] with a cruel death, and you want to kill the Egyptians by them hearing a pleasant heavenly song. No way. They will be repaid measure-for-measure "the way they did to them."

The earth was given to man

Our Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah, taught that the Torah was not given to angels or to non-Jews, but to the Nation of Israel in order to sanctify Hashem's Name in this world. It was given to the entire

אֶהְבֶּתִּי כִּי יִשְׁמַע יי, אֶת קוֹלִי תַחֲנוּנֵי. כִּי הִטָּה
אֶזְנוֹ לִי וּבִימֵי אֶקְרָא: אֶפְפוּנֵי חֲבֵלֵי מוֹת,
וּמִצָּרֵי שְׂאוֹל מִצְאוּנֵי צָרָה וַיִּגּוֹן אֶמְצָא. וּבָשָׂם יי
אֶקְרָא, אֲנִה יי מִלְטָה נַפְשִׁי. חֲנוּן יי וְצַדִּיק, וְאֱלֹהֵינוּ
מֵרַחֵם. שְׁמַר פְּתָאִים יי דְּלוֹתַי וְלִי יְהוֹשִׁיעַ. שׁוּבֵי
נַפְשֵׁי לְמִנוּחֵיכֶּי, כִּי יי גַּמֵּל עָלֵיכֶּי. כִּי חֲלַצְתָּ נַפְשֵׁי

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nation to be fulfilled collectively, with the purpose of creating holy and spiritual lives in this world. The Nation of Israel is therefore connected to the settlement of humanity on the earth; "And the earth was given to man" (Tehillim 115:16), but we have a unique, divine mission within all humanity (Sichot Rabbenu, Shemot, p. 39 and see pp. 242, 319, 322, 356).

And the earth was given to man

Our Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah, explained that we are not angels floating in the air, but we are located here in this world. A person, whether as an individual or as part of a community, must therefore have some connection to some land during his lifetime. When Avraham Avinu was chosen, he was immediately told: "Go for yourself to the Land," and afterwards, "And I will make you a great nation" (Bereshit 12:1-2 and Sichot Rabbenu, Bereshit, p. 128). The holiness of the Nation and the holiness of the Land are exactly this idea. We were created as part of humanity. "I created this Nation for me" (Yeshayahu 43:21). We are not angels, but part of humanity, and in order to for us to appear in the form of a nation, in a

I love Hashem, because He hears my voice, my prayers.

For He turned His ear to me; all my days I will call [upon Him]. The pangs of death encompassed me, and the agonies of the grave came upon me, trouble and sorrow I encounter and I call upon the Name of Hashem: Please, Hashem, deliver my soul! Hashem is gracious and just, our G-d is compassionate. Hashem watches over the simpletons; I was brought low and He saved me. Return, my soul, to your rest, for Hashem has dealt kindly with you. For You have delivered my soul from death, my eyes

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communal-collective form, we need to have a hold in a geographic place on the earth. The Nation and the Land are exactly this: The national structure of the Nation in this Land (ibid. p. 135 and see pp. 150, 165, 371-372).

Question

1. Where is Shabbat mentioned in the Haggadah?
2. In which plague do we see that Hashem is merciful to the wicked?
3. Before which other plagues did Hashem give a warning?
4. Where do we see Israel's uprightness in Egypt?
5. Which animals received a reward for what they did during the Exodus and the period in Egypt? (3 answers)

Answers: 1. Dayenu. 2. He warned them before the plague of hail so that they could be saved. 3. Frogs and locusts. 4. They did not steal during the three days of darkness. 5. A The dogs that did not make a sound (Shemot 11:7). B. The donkeys that carried Israel's burdens (see Bechorot 5). C. The birds that ate the manna which Datan and Aviram scattered around.

מִמּוֹת אֶת עֵינַי מִן דְּמָעָה, אֶת רַגְלֵי מִדְּחִי. אֶתְהַלֵּךְ
 לִפְנֵי יי, בְּאַרְצוֹת הַחַיִּים. הָאֲמַנְתִּי כִּי אֲדַבֵּר, אֲנִי
 עָנִיתִי מְאֹד. אֲנִי אָמַרְתִּי בְּחַפְזִי כָּל הָאָדָם כֹּזֵב.

מָה אָשִׁיב לַיי, כָּל תַּגְמוּלוֹהִי עָלַי. כּוֹס יְשׁוּעוֹת אֶשָּׂא,
 וּבְשֵׁם יי אֶקְרָא. נִדְרֵי לַיי אֶשְׁלֵם, נִגְדָה נָא לְכָל
 עַמּוֹ. יִקָּר בְּעֵינַי יי הַמּוֹתָה לְחִסְדֵיךָ. אָנָּה יי כִּי אֲנִי עַבְדְּךָ
 אֲנִי עַבְדְּךָ, בֶּן אֶמְתָּךְ פִּתְחַת לְמוֹסְרֵי. לֵךְ אֲזַבַּח זֶבַח
 תּוֹדָה וּבְשֵׁם יי אֶקְרָא. נִדְרֵי לַיי אֶשְׁלֵם נִגְדָה נָא לְכָל
 עַמּוֹ. בְּחִצְרוֹת בַּיִת יי בְּתוֹכֵכִי יְרוּשָׁלַיִם הַלְלוּיָהּ.

הִלְלוּ אֶת יי, כָּל גּוֹיִם, שֶׁבְּחִוְהוּ כָּל הָאֲמִים. כִּי גִבֵּר עָלֵינוּ
 חֲסִדוֹ, וְאַמַּת יי לְעוֹלָם הַלְלוּיָהּ:

————— Commentary —————

I will walk before Hashem in the lands of the living

The Gemara says that this refers to the market places (Yoma 71a) of the Land of Israel (Rashi to Tehillim 116:9). This is our role: Sanctification of Hashem's Name in the lower world, just as there is sanctification of Hashem's Name by the angels in the upper world. "We shall sanctify Your Name in this world, just as they sanctify it in the heavens above" (Kedushah of Ashkenazim). This is in fact an even greater labor, as our Sages say "Whose praise of the King is greater - those who are close or those who are far? Those who are far." (Brachot 34b) Our purpose as a Holy Nation is to make known the Name of The Holy One, blessed be He, in this world.

from tears, my foot from stumbling. I will walk before Hashem in the lands of the living. I had faith even when I said, 'I am greatly afflicted;' [even when] I said in my haste, 'All men are deceitful.'

What can I repay Hashem for all of His kindness to me?

I will raise the cup of salvation and call upon the Name of Hashem. I will pay my vows to Hashem in the presence of all His people. Precious in the eyes of Hashem is the death of His pious ones. I thank you, Hashem, for I am Your servant. I am Your servant the son of Your handmaid, You have loosened my bonds. To You I will bring an offering of thanksgiving, and I will call upon the Name of Hashem. I will pay my vows to Hashem in the presence of all His people, in the courtyards of the House of Hashem, in the midst of Jerusalem. Halleluyah.

Praise Hashem, all nations! Extol Him, all peoples! For His kindness was mighty over us, and the truth of Hashem is everlasting. Halleluyah.

————— Commentary —————

"Ani aniti me'od"

Based on the Jerusalem Talmud, Our Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah, explained that the words "aniti" means "I waited." The verse means that when I speak of faith in Hashem, I am willing to wait a long time. Problems which are not solved now will be solved in one year, in two years, or in a few years. "I say in my haste," but if I hastily claim that everything will be completed immediately, "all men are deceitful," then I am saying that everything is a lie. In truth, there is patience within faith.

הוֹדוּ לַיְיָ כִּי טוֹב, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶדּוֹ:

יֹאמְרוּ נָא יִשְׂרָאֵל, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶדּוֹ:

יֹאמְרוּ נָא בֵּית אֱהֲרֹן, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶדּוֹ:

יֹאמְרוּ נָא יִרְאֵי יְיָ, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶדּוֹ:

מִן הַמִּצַּר קָרָאתִי יְהוָה, עָנְנִי בַמֶּרְחֵב יְהוָה. יְיָ לִי לֹא אִירָא,
 מָה יַעֲשֶׂה לִי אָדָם. יְיָ לִי בְעֲזָרִי, וְאֲנִי אֶרְאֶה בְשָׂנְאֵי.
 טוֹב לְחַסוֹת בְּיְיָ, מִבְּטַח בְּאָדָם. טוֹב לְחַסוֹת בְּיְיָ מִבְּטַח
 בְּנֹדִיבִים. כָּל גּוֹיִם סִבְּבוֹנֵי בְשֵׁם יְיָ כִּי אֲמִילָם. סִבְּבוֹנֵי גַם
 סִבְּבוֹנֵי בְשֵׁם יְיָ כִּי אֲמִילָם. סִבְּבוֹנֵי כְדַבְּרִים דַּעְכוּ כְּאֵשׁ
 קוֹצִים, בְּשֵׁם יְיָ כִּי אֲמִילָם. דָּחָה דְחִיתָנִי לְנֶפֶל, וַיִּי עֲזָרָנִי.
 עֲזֵי וְזָמַרְתָּ יְהוָה, וַיְהִי לִי לִישׁוּעָה. קוֹל רְנָה וִישׁוּעָה בְּאֶהְלִי
 צְדִיקִים, יָמִין יְיָ עֲשֶׂה חֵיל. יָמִין יְיָ רוֹמְמָה, יָמִין יְיָ עֲשֶׂה
 חֵיל. לֹא אָמוֹת כִּי אַחֲיָה, וְאֶסְפֵּר מַעֲשֵׂי יְהוָה. יִסֵּר יִסְרָנִי
 יְהוָה, וְלִמּוֹת לֹא נִתְּנִי.

————— Commentary —————

His kindness is everlasting

Unlike the pessimists who only see evil all day long, we see Hashem's kindness all day along, a world flooded with kindness, a world whose beginning was kindness, (as it is written, "Kindness will build the world" [Tehillim 89:3]), and a world whose continuation is kindness, so that kindness is raised above the attribute of strict justice. Kindness is revealed in nature and in history, with miracles and wonders for the Nation of Israel in leaving Egypt, in entering our Land, and guarding us in the lowliness of the Exile. Even the bread with which the Master of the Universe sustains us each day is a great kindness.

Give thanks to Hashem, for He is good, for His kindness is everlasting.

Let Israel say [it], for His kindness is everlasting.

Let the House of Aharon say [it], for His kindness is everlasting.

Let those who fear Hashem say [it], for His kindness is everlasting.

Out of narrow confines I called to G-d; G-d answered me with abounding relief. Hashem is with me, I will not fear. What can man do to me? Hashem is with me, through my helpers, and I can face my enemies. It is better to rely on Hashem, than to trust in man. It is better to rely on Hashem, than to trust in nobles. All nations surround me, but I cut them down in the Name of Hashem. They surrounded me, they encompassed me, but I cut them down in the Name of Hashem. They surrounded me like bees, yet they are extinguished like a fire of thorns; I cut them down in the Name of Hashem. You [my foes] pushed me again and again to fall, but Hashem helped me. G-d is my strength and song, and this has been my salvation. The sound of joyous song and salvation is in the tents of the righteous: 'The right hand of Hashem performs deeds of valor. The right hand of Hashem is exalted; the right hand of Hashem performs deeds of valor!' I shall not die, but I shall live and relate the deeds of G-d. G-d has chastised me, but He did not give me over to death.

פְּתַחוּ לִי שַׁעֲרֵי צְדָק, אֲבֹא בָם אוֹדֶה יְהוָה. זֶה הַשַּׁעַר לַיְי, צְדִיקִים יָבֹאוּ בּוֹ. אוֹדֶךָ כִּי עָנִיתָנִי, וַתְּהִי לִי לִישׁוּעָה. אוֹדֶךָ כִּי עָנִיתָנִי וַתְּהִי לִי לִישׁוּעָה. אֲבֹן מְאֹסוֹ הַבּוֹנִים, הִיְתָה לְרֹאשׁ פְּנֵה. אֲבֹן מְאֹסוֹ הַבּוֹנִים, הִיְתָה לְרֹאשׁ פְּנֵה. מֵאֵת יְיָ הִיְתָה זֵאת, הִיא נִפְלְאֵת בְּעֵינֵינוּ: מֵאֵת יְיָ הִיְתָה זֵאת, הִיא נִפְלְאֵת בְּעֵינֵינוּ. זֶה הַיּוֹם עָשָׂה יְיָ, נִגְלָה וְנִשְׁמָחָה בּוֹ. זֶה הַיּוֹם עָשָׂה יְיָ נִגְלָה וְנִשְׁמָחָה בּוֹ.

אֲנִי יְיָ הוֹשִׁיעָה נָא: אֲנִי יְיָ הוֹשִׁיעָה נָא:

אֲנִי יְיָ הַצְּלִיחָה נָא: אֲנִי יְיָ הַצְּלִיחָה נָא:

בְּרוּךְ הַבָּא בְּשֵׁם יְיָ, בִּרְכָנוּכֶם מִבֵּית יְיָ. בְּרוּךְ הַבָּא בְּשֵׁם יְיָ, בִּרְכָנוּכֶם מִבֵּית יְיָ. אֵל יְיָ וַיָּאֵר לָנוּ, אֲסֵרוּ חֵג בְּעֵבְתֵיכֶם עַד קִרְנוֹת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ. אֵל יְיָ וַיָּאֵר

————— Commentary —————

The stone the builders despised has become the cornerstone

Our revered teacher, Rav Kook, provides two explanations to this verse which seem contradictory, but are in fact complimentary. The “builders” are Torah scholars, who abhor those pioneers who place stone upon stone; and the scholars do not understand that these stones are the foundation of the spiritual structure which will follow.

Open for me the gates of righteousness; I will enter them
and give thanks to G-d. This is the gate of
Hashem, the righteous will enter it.

I thank You for You have answered me, and You have
been a help to me. I thank You for You have answered
me, and You have been a help to me. The stone the
builders despised has become the cornerstone. The stone
the builders despised has become the cornerstone. This
was indeed from Hashem, it is wondrous in our eyes. This
was indeed from Hashem, it is wondrous in our eyes. This
is the day Hashem has made, let us be glad and rejoice
on it. This is the day Hashem has made, let us be glad
and rejoice on it.

Hashem, please help us! Hashem, please help us!

Hashem, please grant us success! Hashem, please grant
us success!

Blessed is he who comes in the Name of Hashem; we
bless you from the House of Hashem. Blessed
is he who comes in the Name of Hashem; we bless you
from the House of Hashem. Hashem is Almighty, He gave
us light; bind the festival-offering until [you bring it to] the
horns of the altar. Hashem is Almighty, He gave us light;

————— Commentary —————

No less than this, the “builders” are the pioneers who build the Land of Israel, who abhor the Torah scholars who call the rock "a Land whose stones are iron" (Devarim 8:9), not understanding that the spirit is the cornerstone of the entire national structure.

לְנוּ, אֶסְרוּ חַג בְּעֵבְתֵיכֶם, עַד קִרְנוֹת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ. אֵלַי
 אַתָּה וְאוֹדֶךָ אֱלֹהֵי אֲרוֹמְמֶךָ. אֵלַי אַתָּה וְאוֹדֶךָ אֱלֹהֵי
 אֲרוֹמְמֶךָ: הוֹדוּ לַיְי כִּי טוֹב, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדּוֹ: הוֹדוּ
 לַיְי כִּי טוֹב, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדּוֹ.

הוֹדוּ לַיְי כִּי טוֹב, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדּוֹ:

הוֹדוּ לַאֱלֹהֵי הָאֱלֹהִים, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדּוֹ:

הוֹדוּ לְאֲדֹנָי הָאֲדֹנִים, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדּוֹ:

לַעֲשֵׂה נִפְלְאוֹת גְּדֹלוֹת לְבָדוֹ, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדּוֹ:

לַעֲשֵׂה הַשָּׁמַיִם בְּתַבּוּנָה, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדּוֹ:

לְרוֹקַע הָאָרֶץ עַל הַמַּיִם, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדּוֹ:

לַעֲשֵׂה אוֹרִים גְּדֹלִים, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדּוֹ:

אֶת הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ לְמַמְשַׁלֵּת בַּיּוֹם, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדּוֹ:

אֶת הַיָּרֵחַ וְכוֹכָבִים לְמַמְשַׁלוֹת בַּלַּיְלָה,

כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדּוֹ:

לְמַפֵּה מִצָּרִים בְּבִכּוֹרֵיהֶם, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדּוֹ:

bind the festival-offering until [you bring it to] the horns of the altar. You are my G-d and I will thank You; my G-d, I will exalt You. You are my G-d and I will thank You; my G-d, I will exalt You. Give thanks to Hashem, for He is good, for His kindness is everlasting. Give thanks to Hashem, for He is good, for His kindness is everlasting.

Give thanks to Hashem, for He is good, for His kindness is everlasting;

Give thanks to the G-d of gods, for His kindness is everlasting;

Give thanks to the Master of masters, for His kindness is everlasting;

Who alone does great wonders, for His kindness is everlasting;

Who made the heavens with understanding, for His kindness is everlasting;

Who stretched out the earth above the waters, for His kindness is everlasting;

Who Who made the great lights, for His kindness is everlasting;

The sun, to rule by day, for His kindness is everlasting;

The moon and stars, to rule by night, for His kindness is everlasting;

Who struck Egypt through their first born, for His kindness is everlasting;

וַיּוֹצֵא יִשְׂרָאֵל מִתּוֹכָם, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ:
 בְּיַד חֲזָקָה וּבְזִרְעַ נְטוּיָהּ, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ:
 לְגִזְרַ יַם סוּף לְגִזְרִים, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ:
 וְהֶעֱבִיר יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּתוֹכוֹ, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ:
 וְנָעַר פְּרַעֲהַ וְחִילוֹ בַּיָּם סוּף, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ:
 לְמוֹלִיד עַמּוֹ בַּמִּדְבָּר, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ:
 לְמַפֵּה מַלְכִים גְּדֻלִים, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ:
 וַיַּהַרְג מַלְכִים אֲדִירִים, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ:
 לְסִיחּוֹן מֶלֶךְ הָאֱמֹרִי, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ:
 וְלַעֹג מֶלֶךְ הַבְּשָׁן, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ:
 וְנָתַן אֶרֶץ לְנַחֲלָהּ, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ:
 נַחֲלָה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל עַבְדּוֹ, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ:

————— Commentary —————

Og, King of Bashan

The Golan is an inseparable part of the Land of Israel! Every G-d-fearing Jew mentions this every Shabbat morning, since the Golan is Bashan: "And Og, king of Bashan...and He gave their Land

And brought Israel out of their midst, for His kindness
is everlasting;

With a strong hand and with an outstretched arm, for
His kindness is everlasting;

Who split the Red Sea into sections, for His kindness is
everlasting;

And led Israel through it, for His kindness is everlasting;

And cast Pharaoh and his army into the Red Sea, for
His kindness is everlasting;

Who led His Nation through the desert, for His kindness
is everlasting;

Who struck great kings, for His kindness is everlasting;

And slew mighty kings, for His kindness is everlasting;

Sichon, king of the Amorites, for His kindness is
everlasting;

And Og, king of Bashan, for His kindness is everlasting;

And gave their land as a heritage, for His kindness is
everlasting;

A heritage to Israel, His servant, for His kindness is
everlasting;

————— Commentary —————

as a heritage...a heritage for Israel, his servant...Give thanks to G-d
of the heavens, for His kindness endures forever!" (see Bamidbar
32:33)

שֶׁבִשְׁפַלְנוּ זְכַר לָנוּ, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶדוֹ:

וַיִּפְרְקֵנוּ מִצָּרֵינוּ, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶדוֹ:

נֹתַן לֶחֶם לְכָל בֶּשֶׂר, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶדוֹ:

הוֹדוּ לְאֵל הַשָּׁמַיִם, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶדוֹ:

נְשַׁמֵּת כָּל חַי, תִּבְרַךְ אֶת שְׁמֶךָ יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ. וְרוּחַ
כָּל בֶּשֶׂר, תִּפְאֶר וּתְרוֹמָם זְכָרְךָ מִלִּפְנֵינוּ
תָּמִיד, מִן הָעוֹלָם וְעַד הָעוֹלָם אֶתְּהָ אֵל.
וּמִבְלַעֲדֶיךָ אֵין לָנוּ מֶלֶךְ גּוֹאֵל וּמוֹשִׁיעַ, פּוֹדֶה
וּמַצִּיל וּמַפְרִיֵּס וּמַרְחֵם, בְּכָל עֵת צָרָה וְצוֹקָה. אֵין
לָנוּ מֶלֶךְ אֵלָּא אַתָּה: אֱלֹהֵי הָרִאשׁוֹנִים
וְהָאַחֲרוֹנִים, אֱלֹהֵי כָּל בְּרִיּוֹת, אֲדוֹן כָּל תּוֹלְדוֹת,
הַמְהַלֵּל בְּרַב הַתְּשַׁבְּחוֹת, הַמְנַהֵג עוֹלָמוֹ בְּחֶסֶד,
וּבְרִיּוֹתָיו בְּרַחֲמִים. וַיֵּי לֹא יָנוּם וְלֹא יִישָׁן,
הַמְעוֹרֵר יְשָׁנִים וְהַמְקִיץ נֹרְדָמִים, וְהַמְשִׁיחַ
אֱלֹמִים, וְהַמְתִּיר אֲסוּרִים, וְהַסּוֹמֵךְ נוֹפְלִים,
וְהַזּוֹקֵף כְּפוּפִים, לֵךְ לְבַדְּךָ אֲנַחְנוּ מוֹדִים. אֵלוֹ
פִּינוּ מִלֹּא שִׁירָה כִּיִּם, וּלְשׁוֹנֵנוּ רְנָה כְּהַמּוֹן גְּלִיו,
וְשִׁפְתוֹתֵינוּ שֶׁבַח כְּמַרְחֵבֵי רִקִּיעַ, וְעֵינֵינוּ מְאִירוֹת
כְּשֶׁמֶשׁ וּכְיָרַח, וַיְדִינוּ פְרוֹשׁוֹת כְּנִשְׂרֵי שָׁמַיִם,

Who remembered us in our lowliness, for His kindness
is everlasting;

And delivered us from our oppressors, for His kindness
is everlasting;

Who gives food to all flesh, for His kindness is
everlasting;

Thank the G-d of heaven, for His kindness is everlasting.

The soul of every living being shall bless Your Name,
Hashem, our G-d; and the spirit of all flesh shall
always glorify and exalt Your remembrance, our King.
From the beginning to the end of the world You are
Almighty G-d; and other than You we have no King,
Redeemer and Savior who delivers, rescues, sustains,
answers and is merciful in every time of trouble and
distress; we have no King but You. [You are] the G-d of
the first and of the last [generations], G-d of all creatures,
Master of all events, who is extolled with manifold praises,
who directs His world with kindness and His creatures with
compassion. Behold, Hashem neither slumbers nor sleeps.
He arouses the sleepers and awakens the slumberous, gives
speech to the mute, releases the bound, supports the falling
and raises up those who are bowed. To You alone we
give thanks. Even if our mouths were filled with song as
the sea, and our tongues with joyous singing like the
multitudes of its waves, and our lips with praise like the
expanse of the sky; and our eyes shining like the sun and
the moon, and our hands spread out like the eagles of

וּרְגַלֵינוּ קָלוֹת פְּאִילוֹת, אֵין אֲנַחְנוּ מִסְפִּיקִים,
לְהוֹדוֹת לְךָ יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, וּלְבָרֵךְ
אֶת שְׁמֶךָ עַל אַחַת מֵאֵלֶיךָ אֵלֶיךָ אֵלֵינוּ וְרַבֵּי
רַבּוֹת פְּעָמִים, הַטּוֹבוֹת שְׁעָשִׂיתָ עִם אֲבוֹתֵינוּ
וְעִמָּנוּ. מִמְצָרִים גְּאֻלְתָּנוּ יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ, וּמִבֵּית
עֲבָדִים פְּדִיתָנוּ, בְּרָעַב זָנַתָּנוּ, וּבְשָׁבַע כִּלְכַלְתָּנוּ,
מִחָרֵב הִצַּלְתָּנוּ, וּמִדְּבַר מַלְטָתָנוּ, וּמִחֲלָיִם רָעִים
וְנֶאֱמָנִים דְּלִיתָנוּ: עַד הֵנָּה עֲזָרוֹנוּ רַחֲמֶיךָ, וְלֹא
עֲזָבוֹנוּ חֶסֶדֶיךָ וְאֵל תִּטְשֵׁנוּ יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ לְנֶצַח. עַל
כֵּן אֲבָרִים שְׁפַלְגַת בָּנוּ, וְרוּחַ וּנְשָׁמָה שֶׁנִּפְחַת
בְּאֵפֵינוּ, וְלִשׁוֹן אֲשֶׁר שָׁמַת בְּפִינוּ, הֵן הֵם יוֹדוּ
וַיְבָרְכוּ וַיִּשְׁבְּחוּ וַיִּפְאֲרוּ וַיְרוֹמְמוּ וַיַּעֲרִיצוּ וַיִּקְדִּישׁוּ
וַיִּמְלִיכוּ אֶת שְׁמֶךָ מִלְּכָנוּ, כִּי כָל פֶּה לְךָ יוֹדֵה, וְכָל
לִשׁוֹן לְךָ תִּשְׁבַּע, וְכָל בֶּרֶךְ לְךָ תִּכְרַע, וְכָל קוֹמָה
לִפְנֶיךָ תִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה, וְכָל לְבָבוֹת יִירָאוּךָ, וְכָל קָרֵב
וְכָלִיּוֹת יִזְמְרוּ לְשִׁמְךָ. כִּדְבַר שְׁפָתוֹב, כָּל עֲצָמוֹתַי
תֹּאמְרָנָה יי מִי כְמוֹךָ. מִצִּיל עֲנִי מִחֲזָק מִמָּנוּ, וְעֲנֵי

— Commentary —

Until now Your mercy has helped us

"Until now Your mercy has helped us and Your kindness has not forsaken us, and do not abandon us, Hashem, our G-d, forever." The Vilna Gaon explains: "This means that which "has helped us" is Your mercy, and not for our own sake. And "has not forsaken us" is Your kindness. We are therefore confident that Hashem our G-d will not abandon us for eternity. If it were for our sake, we

heaven, and our feet swift like deer, we would still be unable to thank You Hashem, our G-d and G-d of our fathers, and bless Your Name, for even one of the thousands of millions, and myriads of myriads, of favors, miracles and wonders which You have done for us and for our fathers before us, Hashem, our G-d. You have redeemed us from Egypt, You have freed us from the house of bondage, You have fed us in famine and nourished us in plenty; You have saved us from the sword and delivered us from pestilence, and raised us from evil and lasting maladies. Until now Your mercy has helped us and Your kindness has not forsaken us, and do not abandon us, Hashem, our G-d, forever. Therefore, the limbs which You have arranged within us, and the spirit and soul which You have breathed into our nostrils, and the tongue which You have placed in our mouth shall thank, bless, praise, glorify, exalt, adore, sanctify and proclaim the sovereignty of Your Name, our King. For every mouth shall offer thanks to You, every tongue shall swear by You, every eye shall look to You, every knee shall bend to You, all who stand erect shall bow down before You, all hearts shall fear You, and every innermost part shall sing praise to Your Name, as it is written: All my bones will say, Hashem, who is like You? You save the poor from one stronger than he, the poor and the

————— Commentary —————

would fear that our sin may cause us to be abandoned, but when it is for the sake of Your kindness, we do not fear at all, since Your kindness exists forever" (Siddur of the Vilna Gaon - Ishei Yisrael, p. 229 and commentary to Mishlei 25:15).

וְאֲבִיוֹן מִגְזָלוֹ: מִי יִדְמָה לָךְ, וּמִי יִשׁוּה לָךְ וּמִי
 יַעֲרֶךְ לָךְ: הָאֵל הַגָּדוֹל הַגְּבוּר וְהַנּוֹרָא, אֵל עֲלִיוֹן
 קִנְיַת שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ: נְהַלְלֶךָ וּנְשַׁבַּחְךָ וּנְפַאֲרֶךָ וּנְבָרֶךָ
 אֶת־שֵׁם קְדוֹשְׁךָ. כְּאִמּוֹר, לְדוֹד, בְּרַכִּי נַפְשִׁי אֶת יְיָ,
 וְכֹל קִרְבֵי אֶת שֵׁם קְדוֹשׁוֹ:

הָאֵל בְּתַעֲצוּמוֹת עֲזָךְ, הַגָּדוֹל בְּכַבוֹד שְׁמֶךָ. הַגְּבוּר
 לַנֶּצַח וְהַנּוֹרָא בְּנוֹרְאוֹתֶיךָ. הַמֶּלֶךְ הַיּוֹשֵׁב עַל כִּסֵּא רֹם
 וְנִשְׂא:

שׁוֹכֵן עַד, מְרוֹם וְקְדוֹשׁ שְׁמוֹ: וְכָתוּב, רַנְנוּ צְדִיקִים
 בְּיָי, לַיִשְׂרָאֵל נְאוּה תְהִלָּה.

נוסח אשכנז

בְּפִי יִשְׂרָאֵל תְּתַהַלֵּל.
 וּבְדַבְרֵי צְדִיקִים תְּתַבְּרָה.
 וּבְלִשׁוֹן חֲסִידִים תְּתַרְוָמֶם.
 וּבִקְרִיב קְדוֹשִׁים תְּתַקַּדְשׁ.

נוסח ספרד

בְּפִי יִשְׂרָאֵל תְּתַרְוָמֶם.
 וּבְשִׁפְתַי צְדִיקִים תְּתַבְּרָה.
 וּבְלִשׁוֹן חֲסִידִים תְּתַקַּדְשׁ.
 וּבִקְרִיב קְדוֹשִׁים תְּתַהַלֵּל.

needy from one who would rob him. Who can be likened to You, who is equal to You, who can be compared to You, the great, mighty, awesome G-d, G-d most high, Possessor of heaven and earth! We will laud You, praise You and glorify You, and we will bless Your holy Name, as it is said: "[A Psalm] by David: bless Hashem, O my soul, and all that is within me [bless] His holy Name."

You are the Almighty G-d in the power of Your strength; the Great in the glory of Your Name; the Mighty forever, and the Awesome in Your awesome deeds; the King who sits upon a lofty and exalted throne.

He who dwells for eternity, lofty and holy is His Name. As it is written: Sing joyously to Hashem, you righteous; it befits the upright to offer praise.

By the mouth of the upright You are exalted; by the lips of the righteous You are blessed; by the tongue of the pious You are sanctified; and among the holy ones You are praised.

————— Commentary —————

In the mouth of the upright

The first level of holiness is an upright person, i.e., fundamental uprightness in relationship to other people (see introduction of the Netziv to Ha-Emek Davar, Breishit). The second level is a righteous person (tzadik), who distances himself from every sin and fulfills every mitzvah, who is particular to be free of any deficiency, who fulfills cautiousness, alacrity, and cleanliness as described in the book "Mesilat Yesharim." Then comes the third level, the pious person (chasid), described in "Mesilat Yesharim" as someone whose every

**וּבְמִקְהֵלוֹת רַבּוֹת עִמָּךְ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּרָנָה יִתְפָּאֵר
 שְׁמֶךָ מִלְּפָנָיו, בְּכָל דּוֹר וְדוֹר, שְׁפָן חוֹבֵת
 כָּל הַיְצוּרִים, לְפָנֶיךָ יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ, וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ,
 לְהוֹדוֹת לְהֵלֶל לְשַׁבַּח לְפָאֵר לְרוֹמֵם לְהַדָּר לְבָרֵךְ
 לְעֹלָה וּלְקָלִס, עַל כָּל דְּבָרֵי שִׁירוֹת וְתִשְׁבָּחוֹת דָּוִד בֶּן
 יִשִׁי עַבְדְּךָ מְשִׁיחְךָ:**

**יִשְׁתַּבַּח שְׁמֶךָ לְעַד מִלְּפָנָיו, הָאֵל הַמֶּלֶךְ הַגָּדוֹל
 וְהַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּשָׁמַיִם וּבָאָרֶץ. כִּי לָךְ נָאָה, יי
 אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ: שִׁיר וְשִׁבְחָה, הֵלֵל וְזִמְרָה,
 עֵז וּמְשִׁלָּה, נְצַח, גְּדֻלָּה וּגְבוּרָה, תְּהִלָּה וְתִפְאֶרֶת,
 קְדוּשָׁה וּמַלְכוּת. בְּרִכּוֹת וְהוֹדָאוֹת מֵעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם.
 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי. אֵל מֶלֶךְ גָּדוֹל בְּתִשְׁבָּחוֹת. אֵל
 הַהוֹדָאוֹת. אֲדוֹן הַנִּפְלְאוֹת. הַבּוֹחֵר בְּשִׁירֵי זִמְרָה.
 מֶלֶךְ אֵל חַי הַעוֹלָמִים:**

————— Commentary —————

inner yearning is performing Hashem's will. The supreme level of holiness, found in the last chapter of "Mesilat Yesharim," is that from a constant Divine devotion, every profane act is exalted to the ideal degree. Our Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah, said however that there is an even higher level: "And in the assemblies of the myriads of Your Nation, the House of Israel." Klal Yisrael (the entirety of Israel)

In the assemblies of the myriads of Your Nation, the House of Israel, Your Name, our King, shall be glorified with song in every generation. For such is the obligation of all creatures before You, Hashem, our G-d and G-d of our fathers, to thank, to laud, to praise, to glorify, to exalt, to adore, to bless, to elevate and to honor You, even beyond all the words of songs and praises of David son of Yishai, Your anointed servant.

May Your Name be praised forever, our King, the great and holy G-d and King in heaven and on earth. For to You, Hashem, our G-d and G-d of our fathers, it is fitting to render song and praise, lauding and hymn, strength and dominion, victory, greatness and might, glory, splendor, holiness and sovereignty; blessings and thanksgivings to Your great and holy Name; from now and forever. Blessed are You, Hashem, G-d, King, great in praises, G-d of thanksgiving, Lord of wonders, Who favors melodious songs of praise, the King, G-d Who gives life to creation.

————— Commentary —————

– "There is no righteous person in the world who reaches the ankles of the entire community of Israel" (Orot, p. 171 and Orot Ha-Kodesh vol. 4, p. 518). Rabbi Asher of Stolín said: Master of the Universe, I am not among the upright, and not among the righteous, and certainly not among the pious and holy, but because I include myself among "And in the assemblies of the myriads of Your Nation, the House of Israel," among Klal Yisrael, I sing to you.

שותים כוס רביעי ומברכים ברכה אחרונה.

הִנְנִי מוֹכֵן וּמְזוּמָן לְקִיּוֹם מִצּוֹת כּוֹס רְבִיעִי מֵאַרְבַּע כּוֹסוֹת: לְשֵׁם
יְחִוּד קוּדְשָׁא בְּרִידָה הוּא וְשִׁכְיִנְתִּיהָ בְּדַחֲלוֹ וְרַחֲמוּ לִיחַד שֵׁם י"ה
בו"ה בִּיחֻדָּא שְׁלִים עַל יְדֵי הַהוּא טְמִיר וְנַעֲלָם בְּשֵׁם כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל.
וַיְהִי נֵעַם אֲדָנִי אֱלֹהֵינוּ עֲלֵינוּ, וּמַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵינוּ כּוֹנֵנָה עֲלֵינוּ, וּמַעֲשֵׂה
יְדֵינוּ כּוֹנֵנָהוּ:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן:

**בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם עַל הַגֶּפֶן וְעַל פְּרֵי
הַגֶּפֶן וְעַל תְּנוּבַת הַשָּׂדֶה, וְעַל אֶרֶץ חֲמֻדָּה טוֹבָה
וְרַחֲבָה, שְׂרָצִית וְהִנְחַלְתָּ לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ, לְאֶכּוֹל מִפְּרִיהָ
וּלְשִׁבּוֹעַ מִטּוֹבָהּ. רַחֵם נָא יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל
עַמְּךָ, וְעַל יְרוּשָׁלַיִם עִירְךָ, וְעַל צִיּוֹן מְשֻׁכָּן כְּבוֹדְךָ,
וְעַל מְזֻבְחֶךָ וְעַל הַיְכָלְךָ. וּבְנֵה יְרוּשָׁלַיִם עִיר הַקֹּדֶשׁ
בְּמַהֲרָה בְּיָמֵינוּ, וְהַעֲלֵנוּ לְתוֹכָהּ, וְשִׁמְחָנוּ בְּבִנְיָנָהּ
וְנֹאכַל מִפְּרִיהָ וְנִשְׂבַּע מִטּוֹבָהּ, וְנִבְרַכְךָ עָלֶיהָ בְּקִדְשָׁהּ
וּבְטָהֳרָה (בשבת וְרִצָּה וְהַחֲלִיצָנוּ בַּיּוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת הַזֶּה).**

————— Commentary —————

Speedily in our days

Question: If the Temple is built "speedily," won't it obviously be "in our days"?

Answer: The Book of Tehillim says (90:4): "A thousand years in Your eyes are like yesterday." We learn from here that our concept of "speedily" and Hashem's concept of "speedily" are not identical.

Fourth Cup

Blessed are You, Hashem, our G-d, King of the Universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.

Drink the fourth cup of wine while reclining to the left.

Concluding Blessing for the Wine:

The following blessing is recited after drinking the wine.

Blessed are You, Hashem our G-d, King of the Universe for the vine and the fruit of the vine, for the produce of the field, and for the precious, good and spacious land which You have favored to give us as a heritage to our fathers, to eat of its fruit and be satiated by its goodness. Have mercy, Hashem our G-d, on Israel Your people, on Jerusalem Your city, on Zion the abode of Your glory, on Your altar and on Your Temple. Rebuild Jerusalem, the Holy City, speedily in our days, and bring us up to it, and make us rejoice in it, and we will bless You in holiness and purity (Shabbat: May it please You to strengthen us on this Shabbat day) and make us joyous

————— Commentary —————

When the Torah says (4:26): "You will surely perish quickly," our Sages calculated that this is 852 years based on the gematria – numerical value – of the word "Venoshantem – you have been long" (ibid. verse 25. Sanhedrin 38a). We therefore pray that the Temple be built speedily according to our understanding, i.e. "in our days."

וּשְׁמַחְנוּ בְּיוֹם חַג הַמִּצּוֹת הַזֶּה. כִּי אַתָּה יי טוֹב
 וּמִטִּיב לְכָל, וְנוֹדֵה לְךָ עַל הָאָרֶץ וְעַל פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן. בְּרוּךְ
 אַתָּה יי, עַל הָאָרֶץ וְעַל פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן:

נרצה

אם עשה כסדר הזה יהיה רצוי לפני האל.

חֲסֵל סְדוּר פֶּסַח כְּהִלְכָתוֹ, כְּכֹל מִשְׁפָּטוֹ וְחֻקָּתוֹ.
 כַּאֲשֶׁר זָכִינוּ לְסִידֵר אוֹתוֹ, כִּן נִזְכָּה לַעֲשׂוֹתוֹ. זָךְ שׁוֹכֵן
 מְעוֹנָה, קוֹמֵם קֹהֵל עֵדֵת מִי מְנָה. בְּקִרְוֹב נֵהַל נִטְעֵי
 כְּנֶה, פְּדוּיִם לְצִיּוֹן בְּרָנָה.

————— Commentary —————

Nirtzah

Question: It says in the Torah: "But they did not heed Moshe because of anguished spirit and difficult bondage" (Shemot 6:9). How is it possible when our Rabbis said: "Any person who has awe of Heaven – his words will be heard" (Berachot 10b) – and there is no one who has more awe of Heaven than Moshe Rabbenu (see Berachot 33b)?

Answer: Rabbi Zadok Ha-Cohen of Lublin explained that this does not necessarily have to be during one's lifetime, but that his words

on this day of the **Festival of Matzot**. For You, Hashem, are good and do good to all, and we thank You for the land and for the fruit of the vine. Blessed are You, Hashem, for the Land and for the fruit of the vine.

Nirtza - Conclusion

This is the completion of the Pesach ceremony according to its rules, in accordance with all of its laws and statutes. Just as we merited to organize it, so may we also merit to perform it. Pure One, Who dwells on high, raise up the congregation of whom it was said, "Who can count them?" Soon lead the plants of your vineyard (Israel), Redeemed, to Zion, with shouts of joy.

————— Commentary —————

are heard during the course of history. Even though they did not heed Moshe Rabbenu's words during that time, they have been heard throughout the generations. The Sefat Emet said, in the name of his grandfather, that the Pesach night is therefore called "Seder" (order or arrange), because we must arrange the "hearings" which were not heard then, but will be properly arranged during the course of history.

לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בִּירוּשָׁלַיִם:

ג' פעמים



————— Commentary —————

This Year in Jerusalem

One year on Simchat Torah, the students were singing "Next year in Jerusalem." Our Rabbi, Rav Tzvi Yehudah, stopped everyone and said: "This year!"

A similar story is told in the Munkatcher Rebbe's Shut Minchat Elazar (1:35) about the first Belzer Rebbe – Ha-Admor Sar Shalom. The Rebbe was once drawing water for "Mayim She-lanu" to bake the matzah to be used at the Seder (lit. water that rested overnight. Matzah is made from water which has "rested" in a cool place overnight out of a concern that warm water will cause leavening – see Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 455). His Chasidim were blessing him in the customary way: "Next year in Jerusalem." The Rebbe said to them: why next year? Don't we believe that with this water that we are drawing now, we will merit to be in Jerusalem tomorrow (Erev Pesach) and eat the matzah there when the Messiah arrives? The only problem is that the Gemara in Pesachim (13a) says that Hashem has already promised Israel that Eliyahu will not arrive on Erev Shabbat or Erev Yom Tov on account of the burden. (Rashi explains that on those days we must be involved in preparing the Shabbat and Yom Tov meals and it would be a burden if Eliyahu

Afterwards say:

Next year in Jerusalem!

[In Israel: Next year in rebuilt Jerusalem!]

Outside of Israel, when two Seder nights are celebrated, the following is recited on the first night only:



————— Commentary —————

arrived on that day). But – the Rebbe concludes – we can nevertheless await him even now and hope that he arrives on Erev Pesach. If someone raises a difficulty based on this Gemara, Eliyahu will resolve it for us when we merit his coming, just as he will resolve all the difficulties we have in the Exile.

Next year in rebuilt Jerusalem

Maran Ha-Rav Kook once visited America to raise money for the yeshivot in Eretz Yisrael and Europe. While there, he met a wealthy man who was willing to make a very generous donation on the condition that Maran Ha-Rav Kook explain to him why Jews in Jerusalem recite "Next Year in Jerusalem" at the conclusion of the Pesach Seder and Yom Kippur. After all, they are already in the Holy City! Maran Ha-Rav answered that in Jerusalem we add in an extra word: "Rebuilt" - "Next Year in the Rebuilt Jerusalem" – and that there is still much to do to fulfill this hope in its entirety. And he added with a smile: When we request: "Next Year in the Rebuilt Jerusalem," our intention is that we merit being completely in Jerusalem – physically, spiritually and in our thoughts, and not like today, when we dwell in Jerusalem, but are planning to leave it to travel to America to raise money..." ("Malachim Kivnei Adam" p. 221).

בליל ראשון אומרים זה:

וּבְכֵן "וַיְהִי בַחֲצֵי הַלַּיְלָה".

בַּלַּיְלָה,	אִז רֹב נְסִים הִפְלִאתָ
הַלַּיְלָה,	בְּרֹאשׁ אֲשֶׁמוֹרוֹת זֶה
לַיְלָה,	גַּר צֶדֶק נִצַּחְתָּו כְּנִחְלָק לוֹ
	וַיְהִי בַחֲצֵי הַלַּיְלָה.

הַלַּיְלָה,	דָּנַת מֶלֶךְ גָּרַר בַּחֲלוֹם
לַיְלָה,	הִפְחַדְתָּ אַרְמֵי בְּאֶמֶשׁ
לַיְלָה,	וַיֵּשֶׁר יִשְׂרָאֵל לְמִלְאָךְ וַיּוֹכַל לוֹ
	וַיְהִי בַחֲצֵי הַלַּיְלָה.

הַלַּיְלָה,	זָרַע בְּכוֹרֵי פְתָרוֹס מְחַצֵּת בַּחֲצֵי
בַּלַּיְלָה,	חֵילָם לֹא מָצְאוּ בְּקוֹמָם
לַיְלָה,	טִיסַת נְגִיד חֲרָשֶׁת סְלִית בְּכוֹכְבֵי
	וַיְהִי בַחֲצֵי הַלַּיְלָה.

"And it came to pass at midnight"

Always You have performed wondrous miracles on this
night.

At the beginning of the watches on this night,
You granted victory to the righteous convert (Avraham)
when the night was divided in two.

And it came to pass at midnight.

You judged the king of Gerar (Avimelech) in a dream
at night.

You frightened the Aramean (Lavan) in the dark of the
night.

Israel struggled with an angel and overcame him at
night.

And it came to pass at midnight.

You crushed the first born offspring of Patros (Egypt) at
midnight.

They did not find their vigor (first born sons) when they
awoke in the middle of the night.

You trampled the swift army of the Prince of Charoshet
(Sisera) by the stars of the night.

And it came to pass at midnight.

יַעַץ מְחַרֵּף לְנוֹפֵף אֹוִי, הוֹבֵשֶׁת פְּגָרִיו
 פָּרַע בֵּל וּמְצָבוּ בְּאִישׁוֹן
 לְאִישׁ חֲמוּדוֹת נִגְלָה רִז חֲזוֹת
 וַיְהִי בַּחֲצֵי הַלַּיְלָה.

מִשְׁתַּכֵּר בְּכָלִי קֹדֶשׁ נִהְרַג בּוֹ
 נוֹשֵׁעַ מִבּוֹר אַרְיוֹת פּוֹתֵר בְּעֵתוֹתַי
 שְׁנֵאָה נָטַר אֲגָגִי וְכָתַב סְפָרִים
 וַיְהִי בַּחֲצֵי הַלַּיְלָה.

עוֹרֶרֶת נִצְחָד עָלָיו בְּנִדָּד שְׁנַת
 פּוֹרָה תִּדְרוֹד לְשׁוֹמֵר מָה
 צָרַח כְּשׁוֹמֵר וְשָׁח אֶתְא בְּקָר וְגַם
 וַיְהִי בַּחֲצֵי הַלַּיְלָה.

The blasphemer (Sancheriv) planned to wave his hand
against the cherished Temple. You dried out his
corpses overnight.

Bel (Babylonia) and its watchmen collapsed in the dark
of night.

To the man of delights (Daniel) was revealed the secret
of the vision at night.

And it came to pass at midnight.

The one who became drunk drinking from the sacred
vessels (Belshazzar) was killed that very night.

The one saved from the lion's den (Daniel) interpreted
the frightening sight at night.

The Agagi (Haman) retained his hatred and wrote writs
at night.

And it came to pass at midnight.

You launched Your triumph against him (Haman) when
[Achasverosh's] sleep was disturbed at night.

You will trample the vintage of the one (Edom) of whom
it was said, "Watchman, what of the night?"

G-d shouted back like a watchman and said, "Morning
is coming, but also night."

And it came to pass at midnight.

לַיְלָה, קָרַב יוֹם אֲשֶׁר הוּא לֹא יוֹם וְלֹא
 הַלַּיְלָה, רָם הוֹדַע כִּי לֶדֶד הַיּוֹם אֵף לֶדֶד
 הַלַּיְלָה, שׁוֹמְרִים הַפְּקִיד לְעִירֹד כָּל הַיּוֹם וְכָל
 לַיְלָה, תֵּאִיר כְּאוֹר יוֹם חֲשֶׁכֶת
וַיְהִי בַּחֲצֵי הַלַּיְלָה:



————— Commentary —————

The Day is approaching (from the song "And it came to pass at midnight")

"The day is approaching which is neither day nor night." Even though we are certainly waiting for the day which is completely day, we know that the Redemption comes "slowly, slowly," like the sunrise, as it says, "Then your light will break forth like the morning" (Yeshayahu 58:8 and Jerusalem Talmud, Berachot 1:1). There are also intermediate times in which day and night are intertwined. Our Sages express this idea in the Zohar: At first there is a thin beam of light which slowly grows stronger. It also says in Shir Ha-Shirim (6:10), "Who is she that looks out like the dawn," and this is followed by "beautiful as the moon," which is a light greater than the dawn, and then "clear as the sun," which is an even greater light and finally "awesome as an army with banners," awesome and frightening strength like a full army bravely marching with flags."

The song continues: "Most Exalted, make known that both the day

Bring near the day (of the Messiah) which is "neither day nor night."

Exalted One, make it known that "Yours is the day and Yours is the night."

Post guardians over Your city all day and all night.

Light up the dark of night as brightly as the light of day.

And it came to pass at midnight.



————— Commentary —————

and the night are Yours." We request from the Master of the Universe that He make known and reveal that not only is the day His, i.e. the complete Redemption, but so is the night, i.e. the bitter Exile. Its purpose is to prepare us (see Olat Re'eiyah vol. 2 pg.300).

Next: "Appoint guards for your city all day and all night." Place within us Torah giants who await the salvation, who see the light taking form, and who from its midst inspire courage and faith within the Nation.

The song ends: "Illuminate the darkness of night like the light of day." Bring the complete light upon us without an intermingling of night. Furthermore, clarify that the purpose of the darkness was to bring the light, which was already within the darkness.

בחוץ לארץ אומרים פיוט זה בליל שני:

וּבְכֵן "וְאָמַרְתֶּם זֶבַח פֶּסַח".

בְּפֶסַח, אִמְץ גְּבוּרֹתֶיךָ הַפְּלִאתָ
פֶּסַח, בְּרֵאשׁ כָּל מוֹעֲדוֹת נְשֵׂאתָ
פֶּסַח, גְּלִיתָ לְאַזְרְחֵי חֲצוֹת לַיִל

וְאָמַרְתֶּם זֶבַח פֶּסַח.

בְּפֶסַח, דְּלַתִּיּוֹ דְּפִקְתָּ כָּחֵם הַיּוֹם
בְּפֶסַח, הִסְעִיד נּוֹצְצִים עֲגוֹת מְצוֹת
פֶּסַח, וְאֵל הַבְּקָר רָץ זֶכֶר לְשׁוֹר עֶרְדָּךְ

וְאָמַרְתֶּם זֶבַח פֶּסַח.

בְּפֶסַח, זַעֲמוּ סְדוּמִים וְלֶהֱטוּ בְּאֵשׁ
פֶּסַח, חֲלַץ לוֹט מֵהֶם, וּמְצוֹת אָפָה בְּקֶץ
בְּפֶסַח, טֹאטֹאת אֲדָמַת מֶן וְנֶף בְּעֶבְרֶךָ

וְאָמַרְתֶּם זֶבַח פֶּסַח.

Outside of Israel, when two Seder nights are celebrated, the following is recited on the second night only:

And you shall say, "This is the Pesach sacrifice"

You demonstrated the power of Your might on Pesach.

You elevated as the first of the holidays, Pesach.

You revealed to the Easterner the events of the midnight of Pesach.

And you shall say, "This is the Pesach sacrifice."

You knocked on his door in the heat of the day on Pesach.

He fed angels unleavened cakes on Pesach.

He ran to take from the cattle, symbolizing the ox, brought in conjunction with the sacrifice of Pesach.

And you shall say, "This is the Pesach sacrifice."

The Sodomites were damned and burnt in fire on Pesach.

Lot was rescued from among them; he baked unleavened bread at the end of the eve of Pesach.

You wiped out the land of Mof and Nof when You passed through on Pesach.

And you shall say, "This is the Pesach sacrifice."

יְהוָה, רֵאשׁ כָּל אוֹן מְחַצֵּת בְּלֵיל שְׁמוֹר
 כְּבִיר, עַל בֶּן בְּכוֹר פְּסַחְתָּ בְּדָם
 לְבַלְתִּי תֵת מִשְׁחִית לָבֵא בַּפְתָּחִי
וְאָמַרְתֶּם זִבַּח פֶּסַח.

מְסַגֶּרֶת סִגְרָה בְּעֵתוֹתַי
 נִשְׁמָדָה מִדִּין בְּצִלְלֵי שְׁעוֹרֵי עֶמֶר
 שָׂרְפוּ מִשְׁמַנֵּי פוֹל וְלוֹד בִּיקָד יִקּוֹד
וְאָמַרְתֶּם זִבַּח פֶּסַח.

עוֹד הַיּוֹם בְּנֹב לְעֵמוֹד, עַד גָּעָה עוֹנֵת
 פֶּסַח יָד כְּתִבָּה לְקַעֲקַע צוֹל
 צָפָה הַצְּפִית עָרוֹךְ הַשְּׁלָחוֹ,
וְאָמַרְתֶּם זִבַּח פֶּסַח.

G-d, you crushed the first one of all their childbearing,
on the "night of watching" of Pesach.

Mighty One, You passed over the first born son because
of the blood of the Pesach,

Not allowing the Destroyer to enter my doors on Pesach.

And you shall say, "This is the Pesach sacrifice."

The sealed city was handed over during the time of
Pesach.

Midian was destroyed through a loaf representing the
barley of the Omer-sacrifice of Pesach.

The burly warriors of Pul and Lud were burnt in a
conflagration on Pesach.

And you shall say, "This is the Pesach sacrifice."

He (Sancheriv) wanted "to reach Nov that very day" until
it became the season of Pesach.

The palm of a hand wrote an inscription about the
crushing of the well-watered country on Pesach.

"The chandelier was lit and the table was set" (describing
the downfall of Babylonia) on Pesach.

And you shall say, "This is the Pesach sacrifice."

קָהַל כְּנִסָּה הִדָּסָה צוֹם לְשֵׁלֶשׁ
 בַּפֶּסַח,
 רֹאשׁ מִבֵּית רָשָׁע מְחַצֵּת בְּעֶץ חֲמֻשִּׁים
 בַּפֶּסַח,
 שְׁתֵּי אֵלֶּה רָגַע, תְּבִיא לְעוֹצֵיט
 בַּפֶּסַח,
 תְּעוֹז יָדָךְ וְתָרוֹם יְמִינְךָ, כְּלִיל הַתְּקֻדָּשׁ חַג
 פֶּסַח,
 וְאִמְרָתֶם זִבַּח פֶּסַח.



כִּי לֹו נֶאֱהָ, כִּי לֹו יֶאֱהָ. (פֶּתֶר מְלוּכָה)

אֲדִיר בְּמְלוּכָה, בְּחוֹר כְּהֻלָּה, גְּדוּדֵיו יֹאמְרוּ לֹו:
 לָךְ וּלְךָ, לָךְ כִּי לָךְ, לָךְ אֶף לָךְ, לָךְ יִי הַמְּמֻלָּכָה.
כִּי לֹו נֶאֱהָ, כִּי לֹו יֶאֱהָ.

דְּגוּל בְּמְלוּכָה, הַדּוּר כְּהֻלָּה, וְתִיקּוּ יֹאמְרוּ לֹו:
 לָךְ וּלְךָ, לָךְ כִּי לָךְ, לָךְ אֶף לָךְ, לָךְ יִי הַמְּמֻלָּכָה.
כִּי לֹו נֶאֱהָ, כִּי לֹו יֶאֱהָ.

Hadassah assembled the congregation to hold a three day fast on Pesach.

You vanquished the chief from the wicked family on a fifty-cubit wooden pole on Pesach.

May you bring "these two things" in an instant upon the Utzites on Pesach!

Let Your hand be strong and Your right hand raised, as on the night of the sanctification of the holiday of Pesach!

And you shall say, "This is the Pesach sacrifice."



To Him it is befitting.

To Him it is becoming.

Mighty in dominion, Superior indeed, His legions (angels) say to Him:

To You, to You! To You, indeed to You! To You, only to You!

"To You Hashem, belongs the dominion!"

To Him it is befitting! To Him it is becoming!

Outstanding in dominion, Glorious indeed, His devoted ones say to Him:

To You, to You! To You, indeed to You! To You, only to You! To You Hashem, belongs the dominion!

To Him it is befitting! To Him it is becoming!

זָכַרְנוּ בְּמַלּוּכָה, חָסִין כְּהִלְכָה, טַפְסְרֵינוּ יֹאמְרוּ לוֹ:
 לֶדָּ וּלְדָּ, לֶדָּ כִּי לֶדָּ, לֶדָּ אֶף לֶדָּ, לֶדָּ יְיָ הַמַּמְלָכָה.
 כִּי לוֹ נֶאֱמָה, כִּי לוֹ יֶאֱמָה.

יְחִיד בְּמַלּוּכָה, כְּבִיר כְּהִלְכָה, לְמוֹדֵינוּ יֹאמְרוּ לוֹ:
 לֶדָּ וּלְדָּ, לֶדָּ כִּי לֶדָּ, לֶדָּ אֶף לֶדָּ, לֶדָּ יְיָ הַמַּמְלָכָה.
 כִּי לוֹ נֶאֱמָה, כִּי לוֹ יֶאֱמָה.

מוֹשֵׁל בְּמַלּוּכָה, נוֹרָא כְּהִלְכָה, סְבִיבֵינוּ יֹאמְרוּ לוֹ:
 לֶדָּ וּלְדָּ, לֶדָּ כִּי לֶדָּ, לֶדָּ אֶף לֶדָּ, לֶדָּ יְיָ הַמַּמְלָכָה.
 כִּי לוֹ נֶאֱמָה, כִּי לוֹ יֶאֱמָה.

עָנּוּ בְּמַלּוּכָה, פּוֹדֵה כְּהִלְכָה, צַדִּיקֵינוּ יֹאמְרוּ לוֹ:
 לֶדָּ וּלְדָּ, לֶדָּ כִּי לֶדָּ, לֶדָּ אֶף לֶדָּ, לֶדָּ יְיָ הַמַּמְלָכָה.
 כִּי לוֹ נֶאֱמָה, כִּי לוֹ יֶאֱמָה.

Pure in dominion, Powerful indeed, His captains (angels)
say to Him:

To You, to You! To You, indeed to You! To You, only
to You! To You Hashem, belongs the dominion!

To Him it is befitting! To Him it is becoming!

Unique in dominion, Potent indeed, His learned ones say
to Him:

To You, to You! To You, indeed to You! To You, only
to You! To You Hashem, belongs the dominion!

To Him it is befitting! To Him it is becoming!

Exalted in dominion, Awesome indeed, those surrounding
Him say to Him:

To You, to You! To You, indeed to You! To You, only
to You! To You Hashem, belongs the dominion!

To Him it is befitting! To Him it is becoming!

Deigning in dominion, Redeeming indeed, His righteous
ones say to Him:

To You, to You! To You, indeed to You! To You, only
to You! To You Hashem, belongs the dominion!

To Him it is befitting! To Him it is becoming!

קָדוֹשׁ בְּמַלּוּכָה, רַחוּם כְּהִלְכָה, שְׁנֵאֲנֵינוּ לֵאמָרוּ לוֹ:
 לֵךְ וּלְךָ, לֵךְ כִּי לֵךְ, לֵךְ אִף לֵךְ, לֵךְ יְיָ הַמַּמְלָכָה.
 כִּי לוֹ נֶאֱדָר, כִּי לוֹ יֵאָהֵב.

תְּקִיף בְּמַלּוּכָה, תּוֹמֵד כְּהִלְכָה, תְּמַיְמִיו לֵאמָרוּ לוֹ:
 לֵךְ וּלְךָ, לֵךְ כִּי לֵךְ, לֵךְ אִף לֵךְ, לֵךְ יְיָ הַמַּמְלָכָה.
 כִּי לוֹ נֶאֱדָר, כִּי לוֹ יֵאָהֵב.



אֲדִיר הוּא

אֲדִיר הוּא,

יִבְנֶה בֵּיתוֹ בְּקֶרֶב, בְּמַהֲרָה בְּמַהֲרָה, בְּיָמֵינוּ בְּקֶרֶב.
 אֵל בָּנָה, אֵל בָּנָה, בָּנָה בֵּיתְךָ בְּקֶרֶב.

בַּחֹר הוּא, גְּדוֹל הוּא, דָּגוּל הוּא,
 יִבְנֶה בֵּיתוֹ בְּקֶרֶב, בְּמַהֲרָה בְּמַהֲרָה, בְּיָמֵינוּ בְּקֶרֶב.
 אֵל בָּנָה, אֵל בָּנָה, בָּנָה בֵּיתְךָ בְּקֶרֶב.

————— Commentary —————

Adir Hu – He is mighty!

Question: "Build Your Temple soon." Why do we say build Your Temple speedily in our days? Don't we learn that redemption arrives slowly, slowly (see Yerushalmi, Yoma 3:2)?

Holy in dominion, Compassionate indeed, His Shinanim
(angels) say to Him:

To You, to You! To You, indeed to You! To You, only
to You! To You Hashem, belongs the dominion!

To Him it is befitting! To Him it is becoming!

Strong in dominion, Supporter indeed, His faithful ones
(Israel) say to Him: To You, to You! To You, indeed to
You! To You, only to You!
To You Hashem, belongs the dominion!

To Him it is befitting! To Him it is becoming!



He is mighty!

May He build His Temple soon! Speedily, speedily, in
our days, soon! G-d, build, G-d build, build Your
Temple soon!

He is superior! He is great! He is outstanding!

May He build His Temple soon! Speedily, speedily, in
our days, soon! G-d, build, G-d build, build Your
Temple soon!

————— Commentary —————

Answer: Along with the understanding that there may be obstacles,
there is also an unquestionable thirst to build the Beit Hamikdash.
This displays an inner attachment to it, and lifts the entire life of a
person to a supreme spiritual level. A person who yearns with every
fiber of his soul for the Temple to be built speedily in his days is a

הָדוּר הוּא, וְתִיק הוּא, זָפְאֵי הוּא, חָסִיד הוּא,
 יִבְנֶה בֵּיתוֹ בְּקָרוֹב, בְּמַהֲרָה בְּמַהֲרָה, בְּיַמֵּינוּ בְּקָרוֹב.
 אֵל בָּנֵה, אֵל בָּנֵה, בָּנֵה בֵּיתְךָ בְּקָרוֹב.

טָהוֹר הוּא, יְחִיד הוּא, פְּבִיר הוּא, לָמוּד הוּא, מְלֻךְ הוּא,
 נוֹרָא הוּא, סַגִּיב הוּא, עֲזוּז הוּא, פּוֹדֶה הוּא, צַדִּיק הוּא,
 יִבְנֶה בֵּיתוֹ בְּקָרוֹב, בְּמַהֲרָה בְּמַהֲרָה, בְּיַמֵּינוּ בְּקָרוֹב.
 אֵל בָּנֵה, אֵל בָּנֵה, בָּנֵה בֵּיתְךָ בְּקָרוֹב.

קְדוֹשׁ הוּא, רַחוּם הוּא, שְׂדֵי הוּא, תַּקִּיף הוּא,
 יִבְנֶה בֵּיתוֹ בְּקָרוֹב, בְּמַהֲרָה בְּמַהֲרָה, בְּיַמֵּינוּ בְּקָרוֹב.
 אֵל בָּנֵה, אֵל בָּנֵה, בָּנֵה בֵּיתְךָ בְּקָרוֹב.



————— Commentary —————

completely different person from one who has a weak and distant feeling. This yearning will also hasten an increase in purity and holiness in the present (Olat Re'iyah vol. 1, p. 127).

He is glorious! He is virtuous! He is blameless! He is kind!

May He build His Temple soon! Speedily, speedily, in our days, soon! G-d, build, G-d build, build Your Temple soon!

He is pure! He is unique! He is powerful! He is all-knowing! He is King! He is awesome! He is exalted! He is all-powerful! He is the Redeemer! He is righteous! May He build His Temple soon! Speedily, speedily, in our days, soon! G-d, build, G-d build, build Your Temple soon!

He is holy! He is compassionate! He is the Almighty! He is strong!

May He build His Temple soon! Speedily, speedily, in our days, soon! G-d, build, G-d build, build Your Temple soon!



בליל שני יש נוהגין לספור כאן ספירת העומר.

לְשֵׁם יְחִוּד קוֹדֶשׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא וְשְׂכִינְתֵיהּ בְּדַחֲלֵהּ וּרְחִימוּ לְיַחַד שֵׁם
י"ה בּו"ה בַּיְחֻדָּא שְׁלִים עַל יְדֵי הַהוּא טְמִיר וְנַעֲלָם בְּשֵׁם
כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל.

הנני מוכן ומזמן לקיים מצות עשה של ספירת העומר כמו
שכתוב בתורה וספרתם לכם ממחרת השבת מיום הביאכם את
עומר התנופה שבע שבתות תמימות תהיינה עד ממחרת השבת
השביעית תספרו חמישים יום והקרבתם מנחה חדשה ליהוה.

וַיְהִי נָעַם אֲדֹנָי אֱלֹהֵינוּ עָלֵינוּ, וּמַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵינוּ כּוֹנֵנָה עָלֵינוּ, וּמַעֲשֵׂה
יְדֵינוּ כּוֹנֵנָהוּ:

**בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ
בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל סְפִירַת הָעוֹמֵר:**

הַיּוֹם יוֹם אֶחָד לְעוֹמֵר

הרחמן הוא יחזיר לנו עבודת בית המקדש למקומה
במהרה בימינו אמן סלה.

לְמַנְצַח בְּנִגִּינַת מִזְמוֹר שִׁיר: אֱלֹהִים יַחֲנֵנוּ וַיְבָרְכֵנוּ יְיָ אֵל
פָּנָיו אֲתָנוּ סְלָה: לְדַעַת בְּאַרְץ דְּרָכָךְ בְּכָל־גּוֹיִם
יִשְׁוַעְתָּךְ: יוֹדוּךָ עַמִּים אֱלֹהִים יוֹדוּךָ עַמִּים כָּל־סָם: יִשְׁמְחוּ
וַיִּרְנְנוּ לְאֻמִּים כִּי־תִשְׁפֹּט עַמִּים מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל וּלְאֻמִּים בְּאַרְץ
תִּנְחַם סְלָה: יוֹדוּךָ עַמִּים אֱלֹהִים יוֹדוּךָ עַמִּים כָּל־סָם: אֶרֶץ
נְתַנָּה יְבוֹלָה יְבֹלָה יְבָרְכֵנוּ אֱלֹהִים אֱלֹהֵינוּ: יְבָרְכֵנוּ אֱלֹהִים
וַיִּירָאוּ אֶת־כָּל־אֲפִסֵי־אֶרֶץ:

אב"ג ית"ץ : אנא בכח, גדלת ימינך, תתיר צרורה :
 קר"ע שט"ן : קבל רנת, עמך שגבנו, טהרנו נורא :
 נג"ד יכ"ש : נא גבור, דורשי יחודך, כבבת שמרם :
 בט"ר צת"ג : ברכם טהרם, רחמם צדקתך, תמיד גמלם :
 חק"ב טנ"ע : חסין קדוש, ברוב טובך, נהל עדתך :
 יג"ל פז"ק : יחיד גאה, לעמך פנה, זוכרי קדשתך :
 שק"ו צי"ת : שועתינו קבל, ושמע צעקתנו, יודע תעלמות :
 בלחש: ברוך שם כבוד מלכותו לעולם ועד :

רבנו של עולם אתה צויתנו על ידי משה עבדך לספור
 ספירת העומר כדי לטהרנו מקלפותינו
 ומטמאותנו כמו שכתבת בתורתך וספרתם לכם
 ממחרת השבת מיום הביאכם את עומר התנופה שבע
 שבתות תמימות תהיינה עד ממחרת השבת השביעית
 תספרו חמישים יום כדי שיטהרו נפשות עמך ישראל
 מזוהמתם ובכן יהי רצון מלפניך יהוה אלהינו ואלהי
 אבותינו שבזכות ספירת העומר שספרתי היום יתקן מה
 שפגמתי בספירה חסד שבחסד ואטהר ואתקדש
 בקדשה של מעלה ועל ידי זה ישפע שפע בכל העולמות
 ולתקן את נפשותינו ורוחותינו ונשמותינו מכל סיג ופגם
 ולטהרנו ולקדשנו בקדשתך העליונה אמן סלה :



אֶחָד מִי יוֹדֵעַ?

אֶחָד מִי יוֹדֵעַ? אֶחָד אֲנִי יוֹדֵעַ:
אֶחָד אֱלֹהֵינוּ שְׁבַשְׁמַיִם וּבְאָרֶץ.

שְׁנַיִם מִי יוֹדֵעַ? שְׁנַיִם אֲנִי יוֹדֵעַ:
שְׁנֵי לְחוֹת הַבְּרִית, אֶחָד אֱלֹהֵינוּ שְׁבַשְׁמַיִם וּבְאָרֶץ.

שְׁלֹשָׁה מִי יוֹדֵעַ? שְׁלֹשָׁה אֲנִי יוֹדֵעַ:
שְׁלֹשָׁה אָבוֹת, שְׁנֵי לְחוֹת הַבְּרִית, אֶחָד אֱלֹהֵינוּ שְׁבַשְׁמַיִם
וּבְאָרֶץ.

————— Commentary —————

Who Knows One?

Question: It seems like there is no connection between this song and Pesach night, and that it could be sung on any day. Why is it part of the Haggadah?

Answer: The Admor of Belz, Rav Yissachar Dov, explains that singing this song is similar to a wealthy man who does not show his treasures in public, unless he drinks wine. When wine enters, secrets emerge (Eruvin 65a). It is the same with the Nation of Israel. After we drink the four cups of wine and raise ourselves to the highest possible level of spirituality and knowledge, we reveal our treasures in public: Our one G-d, the two tablets of the covenant, the three forefathers, the four foremothers...

One is our G-d in the Heaven and on the Earth

Our Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah, would repeat and emphasize that there is revelation both "in the Heavens and the Earth" (Sichot Rabbenu - Shemot, p. 339). "Hashem is one and His Name is one"

Who knows one? I know one!

Who knows one? I know one!

One is our G-d, in heaven and on earth.

Who knows two? I know two!

Two are the tablets of the Covenant; One is our G-d,
in heaven and on earth.

Who knows three? I know three!

Three are the patriarchs; two are the tablets of the
Covenant; One is our G-d, in heaven and on
earth.

————— Commentary —————

(Zechari'ah 14:9). There is a difference between the Heavens and the Earth. "The Heavens are the Heavens of Hashem, and the Earth was given to people" (Tehillim 115:16). The Earth seems so close to us in a physical and real sense. We are located on the Earth, and it is ours. In contrast, the Heavens are distant and elusive, but the Master of the Universe is both heavenly and earthly. There is nothing which disappears or is hidden and "There is nothing which is forgotten before Your honored throne" (prayers of Rosh Hashanah). "And His powerful Divine Presence is in the lofty heights" (Aleinu) as revealed through "the Torah learning of His Nation Israel" [based on the Blessing over Torah] (Sichot Rabbenu - Shemot, p. 242). "One is our G-d in the Heavens and the Earth," the Divine Presence rests in the Heavens and the Earth. The supreme, divine source "cannot be grasped by human thought" (Petach Eliyahu), but is revealed in what comes to us and what applies to us. "Who is

אַרְבַּע מִי יוֹדֵעַ? אַרְבַּע אֲנִי יוֹדֵעַ:

אַרְבַּע אֲמָהוֹת, שְׁלֹשָׁה אָבוֹת, שְׁנַי לַחֹת הַבְּרִית, אֶחָד
אֱלֹהֵינוּ שֶׁבְּשָׂמַיִם וּבָאָרֶץ.

חֲמִשָּׁה מִי יוֹדֵעַ? חֲמִשָּׁה אֲנִי יוֹדֵעַ:

חֲמִשָּׁה חוּמְשֵׁי תוֹרָה, אַרְבַּע אֲמָהוֹת, שְׁלֹשָׁה אָבוֹת, שְׁנַי
לַחֹת הַבְּרִית, אֶחָד אֱלֹהֵינוּ שֶׁבְּשָׂמַיִם וּבָאָרֶץ.

שֵׁשָׁה מִי יוֹדֵעַ? שֵׁשָׁה אֲנִי יוֹדֵעַ:

שֵׁשָׁה סְדְרֵי מְשֻׁנָּה, חֲמִשָּׁה חוּמְשֵׁי תוֹרָה, אַרְבַּע אֲמָהוֹת,
שְׁלֹשָׁה אָבוֹת, שְׁנַי לַחֹת הַבְּרִית, אֶחָד אֱלֹהֵינוּ שֶׁבְּשָׂמַיִם
וּבָאָרֶץ.

שִׁבְעָה מִי יוֹדֵעַ? שִׁבְעָה אֲנִי יוֹדֵעַ:

שִׁבְעָה יָמֵי שִׁבְתָּא, שֵׁשָׁה סְדְרֵי מְשֻׁנָּה, חֲמִשָּׁה חוּמְשֵׁי
תוֹרָה, אַרְבַּע אֲמָהוֹת, שְׁלֹשָׁה אָבוֹת, שְׁנַי לַחֹת הַבְּרִית,
אֶחָד אֱלֹהֵינוּ שֶׁבְּשָׂמַיִם וּבָאָרֶץ.

————— Commentary —————

enthroned on high – Who looks down to see in the Heavens and the Earth" (Tehillim 113:5-6). "Any place in which you find the greatness of The Holy One, blessed be He – there you find His humility" (Megillah 31a and the verses for Motza'ei Shabbat – after Shabbat). The Master of the Universe is revealed in the upper and lower worlds. There is no difference here, but two aspects of "Hashem is one and His Name is one" (Zechari'ah 14:9). And we are "one

Who knows four? I know four!

Four are the matriarchs; three are the patriarchs; two are the tablets of the Covenant; One is our G-d, in heaven and on earth.

Who knows five? I know five!

Five are the books of the Torah; four are the matriarchs; three are the patriarchs; two are the tablets of the Covenant; One is our G-d, in heaven and on earth.

Who knows six? I know six!

Six are the volumes of the Mishnah; five are the books of the Torah; four are the matriarchs; three are the patriarchs; two are the tablets of the Covenant; One is our G-d in heaven and on earth.

Who knows seven? I know seven!

Seven are the days of the week; six are the volumes of the Mishnah; five are the books of the Torah; four are the matriarchs; three are the patriarchs; two are the tablets of the Covenant; One is our G-d in heaven and on earth.

————— Commentary —————

Nation in the world" (Shmuel 2 7:23) who are connected to Him (Sichot Rabbenu - Shemot, pp. 124-125).

שְׂמוֹנָה מִי יוֹדֵעַ? שְׂמוֹנָה אֲנִי יוֹדֵעַ:

שְׂמוֹנָה יָמֵי מִילָה, שְׁבַע יָמֵי שְׁבִתָּא, שְׁשָׁה סְדְרֵי מְשָׁנָה,
חֲמִשָּׁה חוּמְשֵׁי תוֹרָה, אַרְבַּע אֲמָהוֹת, שְׁלֹשָׁה אָבוֹת, שְׁנֵי
לְחוֹת הַבְּרִית, אֶחָד אֱלֹהֵינוּ שְׁבַשְׁמִים וּבְאֶרֶץ.

תְּשַׁעָה מִי יוֹדֵעַ? תְּשַׁעָה אֲנִי יוֹדֵעַ:

תְּשַׁעָה יָרַח לְדָה, שְׂמוֹנָה יָמֵי מִילָה, שְׁבַע יָמֵי שְׁבִתָּא,
שְׁשָׁה סְדְרֵי מְשָׁנָה, חֲמִשָּׁה חוּמְשֵׁי תוֹרָה, אַרְבַּע אֲמָהוֹת,
שְׁלֹשָׁה אָבוֹת, שְׁנֵי לְחוֹת הַבְּרִית, אֶחָד אֱלֹהֵינוּ שְׁבַשְׁמִים
וּבְאֶרֶץ.

עֶשְׂרָה מִי יוֹדֵעַ? עֶשְׂרָה אֲנִי יוֹדֵעַ:

עֶשְׂרָה דְּבָרִיא, תְּשַׁעָה יָרַח לְדָה, שְׂמוֹנָה יָמֵי מִילָה,
שְׁבַע יָמֵי שְׁבִתָּא, שְׁשָׁה סְדְרֵי מְשָׁנָה, חֲמִשָּׁה חוּמְשֵׁי
תוֹרָה, אַרְבַּע אֲמָהוֹת, שְׁלֹשָׁה אָבוֹת, שְׁנֵי לְחוֹת הַבְּרִית,
אֶחָד אֱלֹהֵינוּ שְׁבַשְׁמִים וּבְאֶרֶץ.

אֶחָד עֶשֶׂר מִי יוֹדֵעַ? אֶחָד עֶשֶׂר אֲנִי יוֹדֵעַ:

אֶחָד עֶשֶׂר כּוֹכְבֵיא, עֶשְׂרָה דְּבָרִיא, תְּשַׁעָה יָרַח לְדָה,
שְׂמוֹנָה יָמֵי מִילָה, שְׁבַע יָמֵי שְׁבִתָּא, שְׁשָׁה סְדְרֵי מְשָׁנָה,

Who knows eight? I know eight!

Eight are the days until circumcision; seven are the days of the week; six are the volumes of the Mishnah; five are the books of the Torah; four are the matriarchs; three are the patriarchs; two are the tablets of the Covenant; One is our G-d in heaven and on earth.

Who knows nine? I know nine!

Nine are the months of pregnancy; eight are the days until circumcision; seven are the days of the week; six are the volumes of the Mishnah; five are the books of the Torah; four are the matriarchs; three are the patriarchs; two are the tablets of the Covenant; One is our G-d, in heaven and on earth.

Who knows ten? I know ten!

Ten are the Commandments; nine are the months of pregnancy; eight are the days until circumcision; seven are the days of the week; six are the volumes of the Mishnah; five are the books of the Torah; four are the matriarchs; three are the patriarchs; two are the tablets of the Covenant; One is our G-d, in heaven and on earth.

Who knows eleven? I know eleven!

Eleven are the stars (in Joseph's dream); ten are the Commandments; nine are the months of pregnancy; eight are the days until circumcision; seven are the days of the week; six are the volumes of the Mishnah;

חֲמִשָּׁה חוֹמְשֵׁי תוֹרָה, אַרְבַּע אֲמָהוֹת, שְׁלֹשָׁה אָבוֹת, שְׁנֵי
לְחוֹת הַבְּרִית, אֶחָד אֱלֹהֵינוּ שְׁבַשְׁמִים וּבְאֶרֶץ.

שְׁנַיִם עָשָׂר מִי יוֹדֵעַ? שְׁנַיִם עָשָׂר אֲנִי יוֹדֵעַ:
שְׁנַיִם עָשָׂר שְׁבֻטֵיָא, אֶחָד עָשָׂר כּוֹכְבֵיָא, עֶשְׂרֵה דְבְרֵיָא,
תְּשַׁעַה יְרַחֵי לְדָה, שְׁמוֹנָה יָמֵי מִלָּה, שְׁבַעַה יָמֵי שְׁבַתָא,
שְׁשָׁה סְדְרֵי מְשָׁנָה, חֲמִשָּׁה חוֹמְשֵׁי תוֹרָה, אַרְבַּע אֲמָהוֹת,
שְׁלֹשָׁה אָבוֹת, שְׁנֵי לְחוֹת הַבְּרִית, אֶחָד אֱלֹהֵינוּ שְׁבַשְׁמִים
וּבְאֶרֶץ.

שְׁלֹשָׁה עָשָׂר מִי יוֹדֵעַ? שְׁלֹשָׁה עָשָׂר אֲנִי יוֹדֵעַ:
שְׁלֹשָׁה עָשָׂר מְדֵיָא, שְׁנַיִם עָשָׂר שְׁבֻטֵיָא, אֶחָד עָשָׂר
כּוֹכְבֵיָא, עֶשְׂרֵה דְבְרֵיָא, תְּשַׁעַה יְרַחֵי לְדָה, שְׁמוֹנָה יָמֵי
מִלָּה, שְׁבַעַה יָמֵי שְׁבַתָא, שְׁשָׁה סְדְרֵי מְשָׁנָה, חֲמִשָּׁה
חוֹמְשֵׁי תוֹרָה, אַרְבַּע אֲמָהוֹת, שְׁלֹשָׁה אָבוֹת, שְׁנֵי לְחוֹת
הַבְּרִית, אֶחָד אֱלֹהֵינוּ שְׁבַשְׁמִים וּבְאֶרֶץ.



five are the books of the Torah; four are the matriarchs; three are the patriarchs; two are the tablets of the Covenant; One is our G-d, in heaven and on earth.

Who knows twelve? I know twelve!

Twelve are the tribes of Israel; eleven are the stars (in Joseph's dream); ten are the Commandments; nine are the months of pregnancy; eight are the days until circumcision; seven are the days of the week; six are the volumes of the Mishnah; five are the books of the Torah; four are the matriarchs; three are the patriarchs; two are the tablets of the Covenant; One is our G-d, in heaven and on earth.

Who knows thirteen? I know thirteen!

Thirteen are G-d's attributes of mercy; twelve are the tribes of Israel; eleven are the stars (in Joseph's dream); ten are the Commandments; nine are the months of pregnancy; eight are the days until circumcision; seven are the days of the week; six are the volumes of the Mishnah; five are the books of the Torah; four are the matriarchs; three are the patriarchs; two are the tablets of the Covenant; One is our G-d, in heaven and on earth.



חַד גַּדְיָא, חַד גַּדְיָא

דְּזַבִּין אַבָּא בְּתַרֵּי זִוְזִי, חַד גַּדְיָא, חַד גַּדְיָא.

וְאַתָּא שׁוֹנְרָא, וְאַכְלָה לְגַדְיָא,

דְּזַבִּין אַבָּא בְּתַרֵּי זִוְזִי, חַד גַּדְיָא, חַד גַּדְיָא.

וְאַתָּא כַּלְבָּא, וְנִשְׁדָּ לְשׁוֹנְרָא, דְּאַכְלָה לְגַדְיָא,

דְּזַבִּין אַבָּא בְּתַרֵּי זִוְזִי, חַד גַּדְיָא, חַד גַּדְיָא.

וְאַתָּא חוֹטְרָא, וְהִכָּה לְכַלְבָּא, דְּנִשְׁדָּ לְשׁוֹנְרָא, דְּאַכְלָה

לְגַדְיָא, דְּזַבִּין אַבָּא בְּתַרֵּי זִוְזִי, חַד גַּדְיָא, חַד גַּדְיָא.

————— Commentary —————

Chad Gadya – Part 1

Question: Why is this song written in Aramaic?

Answer: It was written a long time after the destruction of the Temple, like "Ha Lachma Anya – This is Poor People's Bread," for the sake of strengthening the faith of future generations, not to despair of the Redemption when they see other kingdoms disappearing and the Nation of Israel remaining in a lowly state. We must therefore realize that Hashem does not abandon His Nation; all of the empires will crumble and the Nation of Nations will be redeemed. Chad Gadya – the kid – is the Nation of Israel, who is compared to a pure and gentle kid, bought by our Father in Heaven, "I acquire this Nation" (Shemot 16:17), with two zuzim, the two

Chad Gadya

One kid (goat), one kid that father bought for two zuzim.
One single kid, one single kid.

Along came a cat and ate the kid that father bought
for two zuzim.
One single kid, one single kid.

Along came a dog and bit the cat that ate the kid that
father bought for two zuzim.
One single kid, one single kid.

Along came a stick and hit the dog that bit the cat that
ate the kid that father bought for two zuzim.
One single kid, one single kid.

————— Commentary —————

tablets of the Ten Commandments. The evil kingdom, which is compared to a cat, ate it. Do not despair, however, because it will be punished. The Egyptians fell by the hands of the Babylonians. Belshazar and the Babylonians fell by the hands of Darius the Median. Then came Cyrus the Persian who eventually fell by the hands of Alexander the Great. The Greeks were replaced by the Romans and so on. The kingdoms that caused damage to the Nation of Israel: Spain, Turkey, Russia and others down the line... "Because you drowned others, they drowned you; and those who drown you will be drowned eventually" (Pirkei Avot 2:7). We do not ask: Why were the Egyptians or the Babylonians punished for causing damage to Israel when they were the messengers of Hashem? If the cat is a sinner, is the dog justified in punishing him? Hashem sometimes causes good things to occur through the agency of a good person

וְאַתָּא נֹרָא, וְשָׂרְף לְחַוִּטְרָא, דְּהִכָּה לְכַלְבָּא, דְּנִשְׂךְ
 לְשׁוֹנְרָא, דְּאָכְלָה לְגַדְיָא, דְּזַבִּין אָבָא בְּתַרֵּי זַוְיָי, חַד
 גְּדִיָא, חַד גְּדִיָא.

וְאַתָּא מִיָּא, וְכָבָה לְנוֹרָא, דְּשָׂרְף לְחַוִּטְרָא, דְּהִכָּה
 לְכַלְבָּא, דְּנִשְׂךְ לְשׁוֹנְרָא, דְּאָכְלָה לְגַדְיָא, דְּזַבִּין אָבָא
 בְּתַרֵּי זַוְיָי, חַד גְּדִיָא, חַד גְּדִיָא.

וְאַתָּא תּוֹרָא, וְשִׁתָּא לְמִיָּא, דְּכָבָה לְנוֹרָא, דְּשָׂרְף
 לְחַוִּטְרָא, דְּהִכָּה לְכַלְבָּא, דְּנִשְׂךְ לְשׁוֹנְרָא, דְּאָכְלָה לְגַדְיָא,
 דְּזַבִּין אָבָא בְּתַרֵּי זַוְיָי, חַד גְּדִיָא, חַד גְּדִיָא.

————— Commentary —————

and bad things to occur through the agency of a bad person (For example, see Rashi to Devarim 22:8 – this is in order to punish the evil even more). Even though Yirmiyahu calls Nebuchadnezar, "My [Hashem's] servant," our Sages refer to him as evil. This is how events unfold until Hashem Himself slaughters the Angel of Death, swallows death forever, removes the disgrace of His Nation, so that the Nation of Israel will triumph on the stages of the Earth (According to Chesed Le-Avraham, brought at the end of the commentary on the Haggadah of Ha-Malvim of Rabbi Avraham Beirush Flam, and this author [Rav Aviner] is his offspring, nine generations later).

Chad Gadya - Part 2

It is told that Rabbi Yonatan Eybeschütz was sitting in an inn, and people were talking about the famous dispute between him and

Along came a fire and burnt the stick that hit the dog
that bit the cat that ate the kid that father bought
for two zuzim.

One single kid, one single kid.

Along came water and extinguished the fire that burnt
the stick that hit the dog that bit the cat that ate
the kid that father bought for two zuzim.

One single kid, one single kid.

Along came an ox and drank the water that extinguished
the fire that burnt the stick that hit the dog that
bit the cat that ate the kid that father bought for two zuzim.

One single kid, one single kid.

————— Commentary —————

Rabbi Yaakov Emden. This person said one thing and that person said another thing until they started to severely criticize him. They did not recognize him because he was dressed like a villager. Although he was extremely humble, he became quite upset to hear people speaking about him in that way without knowing any of the facts. He therefore turned to them and said: Gentlemen, perhaps you can answer my question. They scorned him, thinking what kind of question could a villager ask, but they ultimately conceded. He asked: The cat that ate the goat in Chad Gadya was evil. If so, the dog that bit him was righteous and so on – the stick was evil, the fire was righteous, the water was evil, the ox was righteous, the slaughterer was evil, the Angel of Death was righteous and that would make The Holy One, blessed be He, evil. How can this be? They did not know how to respond. He said: How do we know

וְאַתָּה הַשּׁוֹחֵט, וְשַׁחַט לְתוֹרָא, דְּשַׁתָּא לְמֵיָא, דְּכַבָּה
 לְנוֹרָא, דְּשַׁרְף לְחוּטְרָא, דְּהִפָּה לְכַלְבָּא, דְּנִשְׁדָּ לְשׁוֹנְרָא,
 דְּאָכְלָה לְגִדְיָא, דְּזָבִין אָבָא בְּתַרֵּי זִוְזִי, חַד גְּדִיָא, חַד
 גְּדִיָא.

וְאַתָּה מִלְאֲדָּ הַמּוֹת, וְשַׁחַט לְשׁוֹחֵט, דְּשַׁחַט לְתוֹרָא,
 דְּשַׁתָּא לְמֵיָא, דְּכַבָּה לְנוֹרָא, דְּשַׁרְף לְחוּטְרָא, דְּהִפָּה
 לְכַלְבָּא, דְּנִשְׁדָּ לְשׁוֹנְרָא, דְּאָכְלָה לְגִדְיָא, דְּזָבִין אָבָא
 בְּתַרֵּי זִוְזִי, חַד גְּדִיָא, חַד גְּדִיָא.

————— Commentary —————

that the dog was righteous? Do we know why the cat ate the goat?
 Maybe the goat did something evil to him. Why did the dog interfere
 in a fight which was not his before he checked out all of the facts?
 The dog is therefore evil, and the stick is righteous and so on until
 The Master of the Universe is found to be the Righteousness of the
 World.

Chad Gadya - Part 3

The Vilna Gaon explains:

The kid is Yaakov who received the blessing from Yitzchak when
 he brought two goats (Bereshit 27:9). He passed this blessing to
 Yosef, as it is written: "May the blessings of your father be added
 to the blessings of my parents for as long as the hills remain. Let
 them be on the head of Yosef, and on the crown of the one separated
 from his brothers" (ibid, 49:26). Yosef became the kid.

The cat – They are Yosef's brothers who were jealous and sold him.

The dog – This is Pharaoh.

Along came the slaughterer and killed the ox that drank
the water that extinguished the fire that burnt the
stick that hit the dog that bit the cat that ate the kid that
father bought for two zuzim.

One single kid, one single kid.

Along came the Angel of Death and killed the slaughterer
who killed the ox that drank the water that
extinguished the fire that burnt the stick that hit the dog
that bit the cat that ate the kid that father bought for two
zuzim.

One single kid, one single kid.

————— Commentary —————

The stick – This is the staff of Moshe Rabbenu through which we were redeemed and which struck Pharoah and Egypt.

The fire – This is the fire which burnt the Temple for the sin of idol worship, which burst forth from the Temple like a flame (Yoma 69b). This is the evil inclination which burns like a fire.

The water – This is the Great Assembly (The leading Rabbinic institution of the Second Temple Period). The men of the Great Assembly extinguished the evil inclination and rebuilt the Temple.

The ox – This is Edom (Rome) which destroyed the Second Temple and the Great Assembly.

The slaughterer – This is Moshiach ben Yosef (Messiah son of Yosef) who is an ox in holiness, "The firstborn of his ox, glory is his" (Devarim 33:17).

The Angel of Death – This is the evil Armilos who will kill Moshiach ben Yosef (see Succah 52a-b).

וְאַתָּה הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא, וְשַׁחַט לְמִלְאָךְ הַמּוֹת, דְּשַׁחַט
 לְתוֹרָא, דְּשַׁתָּא לְמִיָּא, דְּכַבָּה לְנוֹרָא, דְּשָׂרָף לְחוּטְרָא,
 דְּהִכָּה לְכַלְבָּא, דְּנָשַׂךְ לְשׁוּינְרָא, דְּאָכְלָה לְגַדְיָא, דְּזָבִין
 אָבֵא בְתֵרֵי זִוְזִי, חַד גְּדִיָּא, חַד גְּדִיָּא.



————— Commentary —————

The Holy One, blessed be He – Hashem, along with Moshiach ben David (Messiah son of David), will return everything which Israel lost. Similarly, every time we repented, everything was returned to

Then The Holy One Blessed Be He came and killed the
Angel of Death who killed the slaughterer who
killed the ox that drank the water that extinguished the fire
that burnt the stick that hit the dog that bit the cat that
ate the kid that father bought for two zuzim.

One single kid, one single kid.



————— Commentary —————

us. At each stanza, we therefore start the list from the beginning
and, in the end, all of the blessings will return to us. May it be
speedily in our days, amen.

שיר השירים



א שיר השירים אשר לשלמה: ב ישקני מנשיקות פיהו כִּי־טובים
 דִּדִּיךְ מִיַּיִן: ג לְרִיחַ שְׁמֹנֶיךָ טוֹבִים שְׁמֵן תּוֹרֵךְ שְׁמֶךָ עַל־בֶּן עֲלָמוֹת
 אֲהַבּוּךָ: ד מְשַׁכְּנִי אַחֲרֶיךָ נְרוּצָה הִבִּיאֲנִי הַמֶּלֶךְ חֲדָרָיו נְגִילָה וְנִשְׁמָחָה
 בְּךָ נִזְבַּרְהָ דִּדִּיךְ מִיַּיִן מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל אֲהַבּוּךָ: ה שְׁחֹרָה אָנִי וְנְאוּהַ בְּנוֹת
 יְרוּשָׁלַם כְּאֲהָלֵי קֶדֶר כִּירִיעוֹת שְׁלֹמֹה: ו אֶל־תִּרְאַנִי שְׂאֲנִי שְׁחַרְחַרְתְּ
 שִׁשְׁזַפְתָּנִי הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ בְּנִי אֲמִי נִחְרוּבֵי שְׁמֹנִי נִטְרָה אֶת־הַפְּרָמִים כְּרַמֵּי
 שְׁלִי לֹא נִטְרָתִי: ז הַגִּידָה לִי שְׂאֲהֶבָה נִפְשִׁי אֵיכָה תִרְעָה אֵיכָה תִרְבִּיץ
 בְּצַהָרִים שְׁלֹמֹה אֲהִיָּה כְּעֵטִיָּה עַל עֲדְרֵי חֲבָרִיךָ: ח אִם־לֹא תִדְעֵי לָךְ
 הִיפָּה בְנָשִׁים צְאִי־לָךְ בְּעַקְבֵי הַצֹּאן וְרַעִי אֶת־גְּדִיתֶיךָ עַל מִשְׁכַּנּוֹת
 הָרָעִים: ט לְסַסְתִּי בְּרִכְבֵּי פָרָעָה דְּמִיתֶיךָ רַעֲיָתִי: י נְאוּוֹ לְחַיֶּיךָ בַּתָּרִים
 צְוֹאֲרֶךְ בַּחֲרוּזִים: יא תוֹרֵי זֶהָב נֶעֱשֶׂה־לָּךְ עִם נְקֻדּוֹת הַכֶּסֶף: יב
 עַד־שֶׁהַמֶּלֶךְ בְּמִסְבוֹ נִרְדֵּי נָתַן רִיחוֹ: יג צְרוּר הַמֶּר דוּדֵי לִי בֵּין שְׁדֵי
 ילִין: יד אֲשַׁבֵּל הַכֶּפֶר דוּדֵי לִי בְּכַרְמֵי עֵין גְּדִי: טו הִנֵּךְ יָפָה רַעֲיָתִי הִנֵּךְ
 יָפָה עֵינֶיךָ יוֹנִים: טז הִנֵּךְ יָפָה דוּדֵי אֶף נָעִים אֶף־עַרְשָׁנוּ רַעֲנָנָה: יז
 קְרוֹת בְּתִינוּ אֲרָזִים רְחִיטְנוּ רְחִיטְנוּ קְרִי בְרוֹתִים:

Commentary

Shir Ha-Shirim – The Song of Songs

This is a love song between the Master of the Universe and the community of Israel, and it is especially suited to be recited on Pesach, when the Nation of Israel was born. The seed which was planted in Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov developed, blossomed, and a fruit emerged. The Master of the Universe created this Nation. "This Nation I created for Me" (Yeshayahu 43:21). An individual

Shir HaShirim

ב

א אָנִי חִבְּצַלְתַּת הַשָּׁרוֹן שׁוֹשְׁנַת הָעֵמְקִים: ב כְּשׁוֹשְׁנָה בֵּין הַחוֹחִים בֵּן
 רַעֲיָתִי בֵּין הַבָּנוֹת: ג כְּתַפּוּחַ בְּעֵצֵי הַיַּעַר בֵּן דּוּדֵי בֵּין הַבָּנִים בְּצֵלוֹ
 חֲמֻדָּתִי וַיִּשְׁבַּתִּי וּפְרִיּוֹ מִתּוֹק לְחֻבֵּי: ד הֵבִיאֲנִי אֶל-בֵּית הַיָּיִן וְדִגְלוֹ
 עָלַי אֶהְבֶּה: ה סִמְכוֹנֵי בְּאֲשִׁישׁוֹת רִפְדוֹנֵי בַת־פּוֹחִים בִּי-חֹלֶת אֶהְבֶּה

————— Commentary —————

has a soul, and so does a Nation. There is the psychology of an individual and likewise of a nation. A nation is not a collection of individuals, it is a collective being. We descended to Egypt as a big family and we left as a Nation. "Behold, the Nation of the Children of Israel" (Shemot 1:9). "Let my Nation go" (ibid. 5:1. 7:16, 7:26, etc...). Before this, the Name of Hashem only applied to individuals. The world has now reached the spiritual maturity so that the Name of Hashem applies to a community. There is not only individual holiness, but communal holiness. This is a unique Nation which is a part of Hashem. "For Hashem's portion is His Nation" (Devarim 32:9). This part of Hashem is in the form of an entire Nation. We are a nation of Hashem for eternity. "Who chooses His Nation Israel with love." He not only chose, but chooses without a pause. "I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine" (Shir Ha-Shirim 6:3) renews itself continuously at every moment. The connection of The Holy One, blessed be He, Israel, and Torah renews itself continuously. Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin asked his teacher, the Vilna Gaon: We learn all proper character traits from Hashem. From where do we learn the trait of "Being happy with one's lot" from Hashem? The Vilna Gaon replied: He is happy with the Nation of Israel, "For Hashem's portion is His Nation." "I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine."

אָנִי: וְשָׂמְאֵלוֹ תַחַת לְרֵאשֵׁי וַיְמִינוּ תַחֲבַקְנִי: ז' הַשְּׁבַעְתִּי אֶתְכֶם בְּנוֹת
 יְרוּשָׁלַם בְּצַבָּאוֹת אוֹ בְּאֵילוֹת הַשָּׂדֶה אֲסִתְּעִירוּ וְאֲסִתְּעוֹרְרוּ
 אֶת־הָאֱהָבָה עַד שֶׁתִּחַפֵּץ: ח קוֹל דּוּדֵי הַנְּהֵזָה בָּא מְדַלֵּג עַל־הַהָרִים
 מִקַּפֵּץ עַל־הַגְּבָעוֹת: ט דּוֹמָה דּוּדֵי לְצַבִּי אוֹ לְעֶפֶר הָאֵילִים הַנְּהֵזָה
 עוֹמֵד אַחַר כְּתֻלָנוּ מִשְׁגִּיחַ מִן־הַחֲלָנוֹת מִצִּיץ מִן־הַחֲרָפִים: י עָנָה דּוּדֵי
 וְאָמַר לִי קוֹמִי לָךְ רַעֲיָתִי יָפְתִי וּלְכִי־לָךְ: יא כִּי הִנֵּה הִסְתָּו עֶבֶר
 הַגֶּשֶׁם חָלַף הֶלֶךְ לוֹ: יב הַנִּיּוֹנִים נִרְאוּ בְּאַרְץ עַת הַזְּמִיר הַגִּיעַ וְקוֹל
 הַתּוֹר נִשְׁמַע בְּאַרְצֵנוּ: יג הַתְּאֵנָה חֲנֻטָּה פְּגִיָּה וְהַגְּפָנִים סְמֹדֵר נִתְּנוּ
 רֵיחַ קוֹמִי לְכִי לָךְ קְרִי רַעֲיָתִי יָפְתִי וּלְכִי־לָךְ: יד יוֹנְתִי בַחֲגוּי הַסֵּלַע
 בְּסִתֵּר הַמְּדֻרְגָּה הִרְאִינִי אֶת־מְרֹאֲיָךְ הַשְּׁמִיעֵנִי אֶת־קוֹלְךָ כִּי־קוֹלְךָ
 עָרַב וּמְרֹאֲיָךְ יִתִּיר יי נֶאֱוָה: טו אֲחֻזּוֹלָנוּ שׁוֹעֲלִים שְׁעָלִים קְטָנִים
 מִחֲבָלִים בְּרָמִים וּבְרָמִינוּ סְמֹדֵר: טז דּוּדֵי לִי וְאֲנִי לוֹ הִרְעָה בְּשׁוֹשְׁנִים:
 יז עַד שֶׁיִּפּוּחַ הַיּוֹם וְנָסוּ הַצִּלְלִים סָבַב דְּמַה־לָּךְ דּוּדֵי לְצַבִּי אוֹ לְעֶפֶר
 הָאֵילִים עַל־הָרֵי בְּתֵר:

ג

א עַל־מִשְׁכְּבִי בְּלֵילוֹת בְּקִשְׁתִּי אֶת שְׂאֵהָבָה נִפְשִׁי בְּקִשְׁתִּי וְלֹא
 מְצֵאתִיו: ב אֶקוֹמָה נָא וְאֲסוּבָבָה בְּעִיר בְּשׁוּקִים וּבְרַחֲבוֹת אֲבַקֶּשָׁה
 אֶת שְׂאֵהָבָה נִפְשִׁי בְּקִשְׁתִּי וְלֹא מְצֵאתִיו: ג מְצֵאוֹנֵי הַשְּׂמֵרִים
 הַסְּבָבִים בְּעִיר אֶת שְׂאֵהָבָה נִפְשִׁי רְאִיתָם: ד כִּמְעֹט שְׁעֵבֶרְתִּי מֵהֶם
 עַד שֶׁמְצֵאתִי אֶת שְׂאֵהָבָה נִפְשִׁי אֲחֻזְתִּיו וְלֹא אֲרַפְּנוּ עַד־
 שֶׁהִבִּיאֲתִיו יוֹד וְאִי נַחַח אֶל־בֵּית אָמִי וְאֶל־חֲדָר הוֹרְתִי: ה הַשְּׁבַעְתִּי
 אֶתְכֶם בְּנוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם בְּצַבָּאוֹת אוֹ בְּאֵילוֹת הַשָּׂדֶה אֲסִתְּעִירוּ וְאֲסִתְּעוֹרְרוּ
 וְאֲסִתְּעוֹרְרוּ אֶת־הָאֱהָבָה עַד שֶׁתִּחַפֵּץ: ו מִי זֹאת עָלָה מִן־הַמְּדַבֵּר

בְּתִימְרוֹת עֶשֶׂן מִקְטֶרֶת מֵר וּלְבוֹנָה מִכָּל אֲבֻקַּת רוּכָל: ז הִנֵּה
 מִטָּתוֹ שֶׁל־שְׁלֹמֹה שְׁשִׁים גְּבָרִים סָבִיב לָהּ מִגְּבֵרֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: ח כָּל־ס
 אַחֲזִי חֶרֶב מִלְמַדֵי מִלְחָמָה אִישׁ חֶרְבוֹ עַל־יָרְכוֹ מִפֶּחַד בְּלִילוֹת: ט
 אֶפְרַיִן עָשָׂה לוֹ הַמֶּלֶךְ שְׁלֹמֹה מַעְצֵי הַלְּבָנוֹן: י עֲמוּדָיו עָשָׂה כֶּסֶף
 רְפִידָתוֹ זָהָב מִרְכָּבוֹ אֲרָגָמָן תּוֹכוֹ רְצוּף אֲהָבָה מִבְּנוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם:
 יא צְאִינָה וְרֵאִינָה בְּנוֹת צִיּוֹן בַּמֶּלֶךְ שְׁלֹמֹה בַּעֲטָרָה שְׁעֵטָרָה לוֹ
 אָמוּ בַיּוֹם חֲתָנָתוֹ וּבַיּוֹם שְׂמֵחַת לְבוֹ:

ד

א הִנֵּךְ יָפָה רַעֲיָתִי הִנֵּךְ יָפָה עֵינֶיךָ יוֹנִים מִבַּעַד לְצַמְתֶּךָ שְׁעָרֶךָ
 כְּעֵדֶר הָעִזִּים שֶׁגָּלְשׁוּ מֵהַר גִּלְעָד: ב שְׁנֵיךָ כְּעֵדֶר הַקְּצוּבוֹת שֶׁעָלוּ
 מִן־הַרְחֻצָּה שֶׁכָּל־ס מִתְאַיְמוֹת וְשִׁבְלָה אֵין בָּהֶם: ג כָּחוּט הַשָּׁנִי
 שִׁפְתוֹתֶיךָ וּמִדְּבָרֶךָ נָאוֹה כְּפֶלַח הָרִמּוֹן רִקְתֶּךָ מִבַּעַד לְצַמְתֶּךָ:
 ד כְּמִגְדֵל דָּוִד צֹאֲרֶךְ בְּנוֹי לְתַלְפִּיּוֹת אֶלֶף הַמָּגֵן תְּלוּי עָלָיו כָּל
 שְׁלִטֵי הַגְּבָרִים: ה שְׁנֵי שְׁדֵיךָ כְּשְׁנֵי עֶפְרַיִם תְּאוּמֵי צְבִיָּה הָרַעִים
 בְּשׁוֹשְׁנִים: ו עַד שִׁיפּוֹחַ הַיּוֹם וְנָסוּ הַצִּלְלִים אֶלֶךְ לִי אֶל־הַר הַמּוֹר
 וְאֶל־גְּבַעַת הַלְּבוֹנָה: ז כָּלֶךְ יָפָה רַעֲיָתִי וּמוֹם אֵין בָּךְ: ח אֲתִי
 מִלְּבָנוֹן כָּלָה אֲתִי מִלְּבָנוֹן תְּבוֹאֵי תְּשׁוּרֵי א מְרֹאֵשׁ אֲמָנָה מְרֹאֵשׁ
 שְׁנִיר וְחֶרְמוֹן מִמְּעֻנוֹת אֲרִיּוֹת מֵהַרְרֵי נְמָרִים: ט לִבְבַתְּנִי אֲחַתִּי
 כָּלָה לִבְבַתְּנִי בְּאֶחָד בְּאֶחָת קָרִי מֵעֵינֶיךָ בְּאֶחָד עֵנֶק מִצִּוְרֶיךָ: י
 מֵה־יָפוּ דְדִיךְ אֲחַתִּי כָלָה מֵה־שָׁבוּ דְדִיךְ מֵיִן וְרִיחַ שְׁמָנֶיךָ מִכָּל־
 בְּשָׂמִים: יא נִפְתַּת תִּטְפְּנָה שִׁפְתוֹתֶיךָ כָּלָה דְּבִשׁ וְחֶלֶב תַּחַת לְשׁוֹנֶךָ
 וְרִיחַ שְׁלֹמֹתֶיךָ כְּרִיחַ לְבָנוֹן: יב גֵּן א נְעוּל אֲחַתִּי כָלָה גֵּל א נְעוּל
 מֵעֵן חֲתוּם: יג שְׁלַחֶיךָ פְּרָדֶס רְמוֹנִים עִם פְּרֵי מְגָדִים כְּפָרִים עִם־

נְרַדִּים: יד נֶרְדָּ | וְכַרְכֶּם קָנָה וְקַנְמוֹן עִם כָּל-עֵצֵי לְבוֹנָה מֵרַ וְאֶהְלוֹת
 עִם כָּל-רְאֵשֵׁי בְשָׂמִים: טו מַעֲיֵן גַּנִּים בָּאֵר מִיַּם חַיִּים וְנִזְלִים מִן-
 לְבָנוֹן: טז עוֹרֵי צָפוֹן וּבֹאֵי תִימָן הִפִּיחֵי גַנִּי יִזְלוּ בְשָׂמוֹ יבֹא דוֹדֵי
 לְגַנוֹ וַיֹּאכֵל פְּרִי מִגְדֵּיו:

ה

א בִּאתִי לְגַנִּי אֶחְתִּי כֹּלָה אֶרִיתִי מוֹרֵי עֵס־בְּשָׂמֵי אֶכְלֵתִי יַעֲרֵי עֵס־
 דְּבִשֵׁי שְׁתִּיתִי יֵינִי עֵס־חֲלָבִי אֶכְלוּ רַעִים שְׁתּוֹ וְשָׁכְרוּ דוֹדִים: ב אֲנִי
 יִשְׁנָה וְלִבִּי עַר קוֹל | דוֹדֵי דוֹפֵק פֶּתַח־לִי אֶחְתִּי רַעֲיָתִי יוֹנְתִי
 תַּמְתִּי שְׂדֵאֵשֵׁי נִמְלֵא־טַל קְנֻצוֹתֵי רְסִיסֵי לַיְלָה: ג פֶּשְׁטָתִי אֶת־
 בְּתַנְתִּי אֵיכָכָה אֶלְבֹּשְׁנָה רַחֲצֵתִי אֶת־רַגְלֵי אֵיכָכָה אֶטְנַפֶּם: ד דוֹדֵי
 שְׁלַח יָדוֹ מִן־הַחֹר וּמַעֵי הָמוּ עָלָיו: ה קִמַּתִּי אֲנִי לִפְתַּח לְדוֹדֵי וַיְדִי
 נָטְפוּ־מֹר וְאֶצְבְּעֵתִי מֹר עֵבֶר עַל כַּפּוֹת הַמְּנַעוּל: ו פֶּתַחְתִּי אֲנִי
 לְדוֹדֵי וְדוֹדֵי חָמַק עֵבֶר נִפְשֵׁי יֵצְאָה בְּדַבְּרוֹ בִּקְשָׁתֵיהֶו וְלֹא
 מִצְאָתֵיהֶו קָרָאתִיו וְלֹא עָנְנִי: ז מִצְאָנִי הַשְּׂמֵרִים הַסֹּכְבִים בְּעִיר
 הַכּוֹנֵי פְּצֻעוֹנֵי נִשְׂאוּ אֶת־רַדִּידֵי מַעְלֵי שְׂמֵרֵי הַחֲמוֹת: ח הַשִּׁבְעֵתִי
 אֶתְכֶם בָּנוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם אִס־תִּמְצָאוּ אֶת־דוֹדֵי מֵהַתְּגִידוּ לוֹ שְׁחוֹלֵת
 אֶהְבֶּה אֲנִי: ט מֵהַדוֹדֶךָ מִדוֹד הַיָּפֶה בְּנָשִׁים מֵהַדוֹדֶךָ מִדוֹד שְׂכָכָה
 הַשִּׁבְעֵתָנוּ: י דוֹדֵי צַח וְאָדוּם דְּגוּל מֵרַבָּבָה: יא רֵאשׁוּ כְּתָם פֹּז
 קְנֻצוֹתֵינוּ תִלְתְּלִים שְׁחָרוֹת כְּעוֹרֵב: יב עֵינָיו כִּיּוֹנִים עַל־אֶפְיָקֵי מִיַּם
 רַחֲצוֹת בְּחֶלֶב יִשְׁבוֹת עַל־מְלֵאֵת: יג לְחָיו כְּעָרוּגַת הַבֶּשֶׂם מִגְדְּלוֹת
 מְרַקְחִים שְׁפֹתוֹתָיו שׁוֹשְׁנִים נִטְפוֹת מֹר עֵבֶר: יד יָדָיו גְּלִילֵי זָהָב
 מִמְּלָאִים בִּתְרִשִׁישׁ מַעֲוֵי עֶשֶׂת שָׁן מַעְלַפֶּת סְפִירִים: טו שׁוֹקֵיו
 עֲמוּדֵי שֵׁשׁ מִיֶּסֶדִים עַל־אֲדָנֵי־פִזוּ מְרֵאָהוּ כִּלְבָנוֹן בְּחֹר כְּאֲרָזִים: טז

חבו ממתקים וכלו מחמדים זה דודי וזה רעי בנות ירושלים:

ו

א אנה הלך דודך היפה בנשים אנה פנה דודך ונבקשנו עמך: ב
 דודי ירד לגנו לערבות הבשם לרעות בגנים וללקט שושנים: ג
 אני לדודי ודודי לי הרועה בשושנים: ד יפה את רעיתי פתרצה
 נאווה פירושלים אימה פנדגלות: ה הסבי עיניך מנגדי שהם
 הרהיבני שערך בעדר העזים שגלשו מן הגלעד: ו שניך בעדר
 הרחלים שעלו מן הרחצה שכלם מתאימות ושכלה אין בהם: ז
 כפלח הרמון רקתך מבעד לצמתך: ח ששים המה מלכות ושמנים
 פילגשים ועלמות אין מספר: ט אחת היא יונתי תמתי אחת היא
 לאמה ברה היא ליולדתה ראוה בנות ויאשרוה מלכות ופילגשים
 ויהללוה: י מיזאת הנשקפה כמו שחר יפה כלבנה ברה בחמה
 אימה פנדגלות: יא אלגנת אגוז ירדתי לראות באבי הנחל
 לראות הפרחה הגפן הנצו הרמנים: יב לא ידעתי נפשי שמתני
 מרכבות עמי נדיב:

ז

א שובי שובי השולמית שובי שובי ונחזה בך מהתחזו בשולמית
 כמחלת המחנים: ב מהיפו פעמיך בנעלים בתנדיב חמוקי
 ירכיך כמו חלאים מעשה ידי אמן: ג שררך אגן הסהר אל יחסר
 המזג בטנך ערמת חטים סוגה בשושנים: ד שני שדיך בשני
 עפרים תאמי צביה: ה צוארך כמגדל השן עיניך ברכות בחשבון
 על שער בת רבים אפך כמגדל הלבנון צופה פני דמשק:

ו ראשך עליך בכרמל ודלת ראשך בארזמן מלך אסור ברהטים:
 ז מהיפית ומהנעמת אהבה בתענוגים: ח זאת קומתך דמתה
 לתמר ושדיך לאשכלות: ט אמרתי אעלה בתמר אחזה בסנסניו
 ויהיונא שדיך באשכלות הגפן וריח אפך פתפוחים: י וחבך ביין
 הטוב הולך לדודי למישרים דובב שפתי ישנים: יא אני לדודי
 ועלי תשוקתו: יב לכה דודי נצא השדה נלינה בכפרים: יג
 נשכימה לכרמים נראה אספרחה הגפן פתח הסמדר הנצו
 הרמונים שם אתן אתדדי לך: יד הדודאים נתנוריח ועלפתחינו
 כלמגדים חדשים גםישנים דודי צפנתי לך:

ח

א מי יתנדך באח לי יונק שדי אמי אמצאך בחוץ אשקך גם לא-
 יבזו לי: ב אנהגך אביאך אלבית אמי תלמדני אשקך מיין
 הרקח מעסים רמני: ג שמאלו תחת ראשי וימינו תחבקני: ד
 השבעתי אתכם בנות ירושלים מהתעירו | ומהתעירו את-
 האהבה עד שתחפץ: ה מי זאת עלה מןהמדבר מתרפקת על-
 דודה תחת התפוח עוררתיך שמה חבלתך אמך שמה חבלה
 ילדתך: ו שימני כחותם עללבך כחותם עלזרועך כיעזה כמות
 אהבה קשה כשאול קנאה רשפיה רשפי אש שלהבתיה: ז מים
 רבים לא יוכלו לכבות אתהאהבה ונהרות לא ישטפוה אסיתן
 איש אתכלהון ביתו באהבה בזו יבזו לו: ח אחות לנו קטנה
 ושדים אין לה מהנעשה לאחותנו ביום שידברבה: ט אסחומה
 היא נבנה עליה טירת כסף ואסדלת היא נצור עליה לוח ארז: י
 אני חומה ושדי כמגדלות אז הייתי בעיניו כמוצאת שלום: יא

כָּרַם הָיָה לְשִׁלְמָה בְּבַעַל הַמוֹן נָתַן אֶת־הַכֶּרֶם לַנְּטָרִים אִישׁ יָבֵא
 בְּפָרְיוֹ אֶלֶף כֶּסֶף: יב כָּרְמֵי שְׁלֵי לְפָנַי הָאֵלֶף לְךָ שְׁלֹמֶה וּמְאֵתִים
 לַנְּטָרִים אֶת־פְּרִיֹ: יג הַיּוֹשֶׁבֶת בְּגַנִּים חֲבָרִים מְקַשְׁיָבִים לְקוֹלֶךָ
 הַשְּׁמִיעֵנִי: יד בָּרַח | הוֹדִי וּדְמָה־לְךָ לְצַבִּי אוֹ לְעַפְרֵי הָאֵילִים עַל
 הָרִי בְּשָׁמַיִם:

רְבוֹן כָּל הָעוֹלָמִים. יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתַי. שְׁבֻכּוֹת שִׁיר
 הַשִּׁירִים אֲשֶׁר קָרִיתִי וְלִמְדָתִי. שֶׁהוּא קֹדֶשׁ קְדָשִׁים. בְּזֻכּוֹת פְּסוּקֵינוּ, וּבְזֻכּוֹת
 תְּבוּתָנוּ, וּבְזֻכּוֹת אוֹתִיּוֹתָנוּ, וּבְזֻכּוֹת נְקֻדּוֹתָנוּ, וּבְזֻכּוֹת טְעָמֵינוּ, וּבְזֻכּוֹת שְׂמוֹתָנוּ,
 וְצִרּוּפֵינוּ וְרִמּוֹנוֹ וְסוּדוֹתָנוּ הַקְּדוּשִׁים וְהַטְּהוֹרִים, הַנּוֹרְאִים הַיּוֹצֵאִים מִמֶּנּוּ. שֶׁתִּהְיֶה
 שְׁעָה זוֹ שְׁעַת רַחֲמִים, שְׁעַת הַקְּשָׁבָה, שְׁעַת הַאֲנָנָה, וְנִקְרָאךָ וְתַעֲנֵנּוּ, נְעַתִּיר
 לְךָ וְהַעֲתֵר לָנוּ, שִׁיְהִי עוֹלָה לְפָנֶיךָ קְרִיאַת וְלִמּוּד שִׁיר הַשִּׁירִים, כְּאֵלּוֹ הַשְּׁגָנוּ
 כָּל הַסּוּדוֹת הַנִּפְלְאוֹת וְהַנּוֹרְאוֹת אֲשֶׁר הֵם חֲתוּמִים בּוֹ בְּכָל תְּנָאִיו. וְנִזְכָּה
 לְמָקוֹם שֶׁהָרוּחוֹת וְהַנְּשֻׁמוֹת נְחַצְבוֹת מִשָּׁם, וְכֵאלּוֹ עָשִׂינוּ כָּל מַה שְּׂמוּטָל
 עָלֵינוּ לְהַשִּׁיג. בֵּין בְּגִלְגּוֹל זֶה בֵּין בְּגִלְגּוֹל אַחֵר, וְלִהְיוֹת מִן הָעוֹלָם וְהַזּוֹכִים
 לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא עִם שְׂאֵר צְדִיקִים וְחַסִּידִים, וּמִלֵּא כָּל מִשְׁאֵלוֹת לְבַנּוֹ לְטוֹבָה.
 וְתִהְיֶה עִם לְבַבְנוּ וְאִמְרֵי פִינוּ בְּעַת מַחְשְׁבוֹתֵינוּ, וְעִם יָדֵינוּ בְּעַת מַעֲפָדֵינוּ,
 וְתִשְׁלַח בְּרַכָּה וְהַצְלָחָה וְהַרוּחָה בְּכָל מַעֲשֵׂה יָדֵינוּ, וּמַעֲפָר תִּקְיַמְנוּ, וּמַאֲשָׁפוֹת
 דְּלוֹתֵנוּ תִרְוַמְנוּ, וְתִשָּׁיב שְׂכִינְתְּךָ לְעִיר קְדֻשָּׁךְ. בְּמַהֲרָה בְּיָמֵינוּ. אָמֵן:

Questions

1. What is a special blessing during the month of Nissan, beside those recited at the Seder?
2. What is shemurah (guarded) matzah?
3. Until what time can one eat the Afikoman?
4. At what point do we refrain from reclining at the Seder?
5. Do we recite the bedtime Shema on Seder night? Why or why not?
6. What is chadash?
7. How is there a hair's breath difference between "chatmetz" and "matzah"?
8. How many times do we recite Hallel on the first day of Pesach?
9. How many times do we say "Who made us holy with His commandments and commanded us..." at the Seder?
10. How many blessing over food and drink do we say at the Seder?

Answers: 1. Upon seeing fruit trees in bloom during the spring. 2. It is matzah which is specially guarded from any moisture. Some say from the time of harvesting, others say from the time of grinding. 3. Until midnight. 4. When eating maror, a remembrance of slavery. 5. We are exempt from reciting additional verses from the Torah because it is a night protected from harmful spirits, but we do recite the Shema and the blessing "Ha-Mapil." 6. The new grain of each year which may only be eaten beginning on the eighteenth of Nissan. 7. They have the same letters except that "matzah" has the Hebrew letter "hey" and "chametz" has a "chet" which has a tiny line (a hair's breath) which connects the two parts. 8. Either two or three. Many have the custom to recite Hallel in shul on Seder night as well. 9. Three times: Ritually washing hands, mitzvah of matzah and mitzvah of maror. 10. Ashkenazic – 6 times: four over wine, "Borei Peri Ha-Adamah" over karpas and maror and "Ha-Motzi" for matzah, Sefardic Jews – 4 times: They do not recite a separate blessing for the second and fourth cup of wine.

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THIS YEAR IN JERUSALEM!

Rav Shlomo Aviner
on the
Haggadah

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