



The Seder ILLUMINATED

Seder & Haggadah Guide
- with Divrei Torah -

Rabbi Ari Levitan

Including an Excerpt of "Eliyahu HaNavi"
by R' Avraham Yom Tov Rotenberg



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"ESSENTIALLY" ABOVE & BEYOND!

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**EXCERPT OF "ELIYAHU HANAVI"
BY R' AVRAHAM YOM TOV ROTENBERG**

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To My Dear Brothers and Sisters 'שיח,

I hope this letter finds you and your loved ones in good health and spirits.

The primary theme of Seder night is our children, והגדת לבנך . Many of the Minhagim and activities that we do are meant to engage, inspire and encourage our children to ask questions. We are then expected to provide clear and heartwarming answers.

This year, many of us find ourselves in an unusual place. Instead of being guests and participants at a Seder, we now have to lead the actual Seder. We need to set the tone, encourage our children to ask questions and hopefully have some answers as well.

This concern was expressed to me by many of you and it was that burning desire that I sensed, along with the patience and encouragement of my wife and children, that I embarked on this time consuming project.

We begin the Haggadah with a paragraph not in Hebrew but in Aramaic. *Ha Lachma Anya*, this is the bread of affliction/poor man's bread etc. It is not sourced in Chazal and the language is puzzling. The Chasam Sofer (Haggadah-Chad Gadya) suggests that this paragraph was authored the first year after the destruction of the Bais HaMikdash. The first year that Klal Yisroel sat down to a Seder WITHOUT a Karbon Pesach. And these moving words were deliberately said in Aramaic to convey the pain. The Matzah as we know, represents both slavery and freedom. However, this year, the Yid in Galus told his children at the Seder, it is *Lachma Anya*, it symbolizes only slavery and exile. Last year with the Karbon Pesach, only those that were invited were allowed to partake. This year, sadly it is *Kol Dichfin*, anyone that is hungry can join. But, he continued with words of hope, *Hashaatah Hachah*, this year we are here in Galus and lacking the centerpiece of Pesach, but next year we will be free and back home in Yerushalayim.

This timeless pep talk should be our anthem of hope as well. And while we all may feel somewhat displaced this year, perhaps we can channel some of those feelings to the ultimate misplacement of being in Galus, and Daven that we too will be able to celebrate Pesach properly.

לשנה הבאה בירושלם!

חג כשר ושמח

Rabbi & Mrs. Ari Levitan

ערב פסח תש"פ

קרובן פסח

KARBON PESACH

It is customary to read the Parsha of the Karbon Pesach on Erev Pesach after Chatzos, the day and time when the Karbon would be brought.

EYEWITNESS REPORT OF A NON-JEW THAT OBSERVED THE KARBON PESACH RITUAL

The celebration of Pesach in the Bais HaMikdash was a magnificent spectacle. In his siddur Bais Yaakov, Ravi Yaakov Emden quotes (from the Sefer Shevet Yehuda) the following eyewitness account of a Roman official who was stationed in Yerushalayim, and recorded it for posterity. I have always been inspired by this testimony as it gives us a real-time view of our past through a different lens. I hope that this fresh perspective will plant seeds of longing for the glory of old, in our hearts.

“when the beginning of the month they call Nissan arrives, the king and the judges send runners and messengers to urge the cattle and sheep herdsmen in the countryside around Jerusalem to hurry. They need to bring enough livestock to satisfy the sacrificial and personal consumption needs of the festival pilgrims, who would soon be arriving in vast number. Failing to heed this call resulted in one’s property and money being confiscated and donated to the temple. All of the herdsmen would hastily arrive.

“the herdsmen lead their animals through a river near Jerusalem to cleanse them of all muck. It is claimed that this is what Solomon meant when he wrote (Song of Songs 6:6), ‘Your teeth are like flock of ewes that have come up from being washed.’ When they reach the hills around Jerusalem, the multitude of sheep is so great that green of the grass is completely obscured by the white sea of sheep’s wool.

“When the tenth of the month arrives, they all go out to buy the offering they call Pesach. The Jews have an established custom to and when they go out for this purpose, they do not say to one another. ‘Go ahead!’ or ‘Make way for me to pass!’- Even if King Solomon or King

David would be at the end of the line.

“I pointed out to the priests that this is not in keeping with the rules of politeness, but they explained to me that it is to demonstrate that status has no place during the preparation for the temple service, certainly not during the service itself. During these times, everyone is equally esteemed.

“When the fourteenth of the month arrives, they (the priests) go up a ramp onto a high temple tower, which the Jews call ‘Lul’... they carry three silver trumpets with them and sound them. And after the trumpets are sounded, they announce, ‘People of God, listen! It is time to slaughter the Pesach for the sake of the One who rested His name in this great and holy house.’

“When the people hear this call, they don their holiday garments, because the festival begins for the Jews at noon, the time when the sacrifices begin to be brought. At the entrance to the Great Courtyard, twelve Levites stand on the outside holding silver bars, and twelve stand on the outside holding gold bars. Those on the outside keep order in the crowd, so that no one is injured in the rush and the crush, and to prevent tempers flaring up when everyone tries to enter the Courtyard at once. In fact, the pressure of the crowd was so great one Passover that an old man and his offering were trampled underfoot. The Levites on the inside control the exiting crowd. They also close the gates of the Courtyard when they consider it filled to capacity.

“When the people reach the slaughtering site, there are rows of priests holding ladles of silver and gold in their hands. All the priests in a row, headed by a priest holding a silver ladle, also hold silver ladles. All headed by a priest holding a gold ladle, also hold gold ladles. This creates an aura of magnificence and splendor. The priest at the head of each row takes a blood-filled ladle and passes it on to the priest behind him, and so on until it reaches the altar. The priest standing on the altar returns the empty ladle to the priest near him, and so on until it returns to the slaughtering site. In this way, every priest takes a full ladle and returns an empty ladle. The entire operation moves smoothly, because the priests are so industrious in the service and ladles move back and forth like arrows shot by mighty warriors. They begin practice thirty days before in order to find any flaw in the process that might interfere with the smooth

functioning of the service.

“There are two great, high pillars upon which two priests stand holding silver trumpets in their hands. They sound the trumpets at the beginning of the sacrificial service of each group that enters the Courtyard, to signal to priests arrayed on the dais to say the Hallel with song and thanksgiving, playing every instrument in their possession. Indeed, all the instruments are brought out on that day. The owner of the sacrificial animal must also say the Hallel, and if the slaughter was not yet completed, they must repeat the Hallel.

“After the animal is slaughtered, they go into the courtyards and. There they find the walls covered with iron hooks and forks on which to hang the slaughtered animal and remove its hide. There are also piles of poles which can be used for removing the hides if there are no forks to be found. The poles are placed on the shoulders of two people with the animals suspended from it and the hide is removed. The appropriate parts are sent off to the altar, and the owners go home happy and content, like soldiers returning victorious from the battlefield. The Jews have always considered it a disgrace not to have brought the Pesach in its appointed time...

“The ovens in which they roast the offerings are at the entrances, and I was told that this is to publicize their faith in God and to enhance the celebration of the festival. After the meat is roasted, it is eaten with such loud expressions of praise and song that they can be heard from afar. None of the city gates of Jerusalem is closed on the night of Passover, to accommodate the multitudes of people coming and going.”

סימני הסדר

SIMANEI HASEDER

Kadesh, Urchatz, Karpas etc. are the words and song that almost every Seder begins with. And as the night progresses, the leader of the home declares them with authority before beginning each section. Yesod V'Shoresh H'avodah (Shaar 9 Perek 6) reveals that these seemingly

simple headers actually contain great secrets and mystical elements and need to be expressed verbally. This was in fact the custom and practice of many of our great leaders. There are numerous reasons given for these musical pronouncements.

- 1) Maharshal (Responsa 88) bases it on (Yeshaya 30:29) For you, there shall be singing as on a night when a festival is hallowed, implying that night shall be filled with melodies and songs.
- 2) Machzor Vitri and Sefer H'pardes suggest that it was implemented to ensure that no small detail of this special night be omitted or forgotten and to help everyone be aware of the proceedings.

Perhaps this last reason has some historical significance. There are opinions that the author of these headers is Rashi (see Machzor Vitri Hilchos Pesach 65). However, the majority opinion is that the author was Rav Shmuel M'Plaizah one of the Baalei HaTosafos and a friend of the S'ma"g and Rabeinu Yechiel of Paris. Rav Shmuel M'Plaizah was one of the martyrs that were forced to stand trial and "defend" our precious Torah at the infamous Disputation of Paris that took place in 1240. We must bear in mind that this was prior to the invention of the printing press and all books were handwritten. The verdict of the corrupt trial was to burn all Jewish books, 24 wagonloads in total, essentially eradicating all Torah study and robbing us of our treasure. Adding insult to injury, the great leaders of the time were forced to watch as our precious books were hurled into the raging fires. One of the bitter Kinna's that we say on Tisha B'av, Shaali Srufah B'aish, was actually authored by M'haram M'Rotenberg as he watched the inferno consume our Sefarim. The tragedy was so great, that its anniversary has been Halachically deemed a fast day for all time – see Magen Avraham Orach Chaim 580:9 and Mishna Berura.

Perhaps it can be suggested that the Simanei Haseder authored by Rav Shmuel M'Plaizah, to ensure that nothing is forgotten in an era that was paralyzed with the fear of losing our precious Torah, has ultimately become the very symbol of its eternal destiny. The precious

Haggadah revolves around these iconic Simanim. According the Jewish Book Counsel, the Haggadah is the **most published Jewish book**, to date, with over 3,500 printed versions and has been translated into 35 of the languages. This tattered and wine stained Haggadah, along with its scorched pages, has outlived the countless attempts of our enemies and is testimony that the flame of Torah will never be extinguished. We will defy nature and emerge stronger, more dedicated and will continue printing Sefarim and Jewish books.

Let us embrace every aspect of this holy night. Let us try to understand each and every one of these Simanim and how they relate to this night specifically. And let us remember that these special Simanim are testimony to the eternity of our Torah and the Nation that cherishes it.

ליל הסדר

The Seder

The first night of Pesach is universally referred to as “Leil Haseder”, the evening of the Seder. It is not called “The Night of Matzah’s” or any other of the Mitzvahs we perform. It is undoubtedly an accurate description of what the night expects of us.

The word Seder means orderly. The night of Pesach is a night that radiates preciseness and order.

Maharil (Derashos at the end of the Haggadah) advises to follow every single detail of the Seder, even if they may appear small and insignificant, for every aspect is substantial.

Even the songs and poems at Nirtzah, which may seem somewhat childish like, are all rooted in the deepest and most mystical parts of Torah. Chida (Chaim Shial vol. one – 28) rules, based on an incident where one mocked the legitimacy of these “poems”, that he is in fact deserving of the Cherem – ban/excommunication that was levied upon him.

Chidushei Harim (quoted by Sfas Emes 5642) explains the title “Leil Haseder” based on Maharal (Gevuras Hashem-second introduction) that just as there is order in the natural world, there is order in the supernatural world. Miracles are also part of meticulously planned world events. On this night, we internalize this important lesson that even the abnormal events are prearranged and have their precise place in the organized plan.

Chazal in numerous places (Beraishis Rabba 2:4, 16:4 etc.) list the four Kingdoms - Galuyos (exiles) that Klal Yisroel has endured. Bavel (Babylonia), Motai (Median), Yavan (Greek) and Edom (Rome). Interestingly, Galus Mitzrayim is not included on that list. It is understood that the Galus of Mitzrayim encompasses all of the exiles. Baal Haturim (Shemos 6:6) suggests that the four expressions of Geulah correspond to the four Kingdoms. On the night that we celebrate liberation from Mitzrayim, we recognize that all the exiles and suffering throughout history have been predetermined from the beginning of time. There is a calculated plan in place and all world events, both positive and negative, natural and supernatural are in fact orderly.

The table should be set early with our finest silver and tableware. One should be prepared to start the Seder immediately after nightfall - Maariv to ensure that the children are awake to participate.

הַגְּדָלָה

The Haggadah

The oral Torah was NOT ALLOWED to be written down. It was taught to us by Moshe at Har Sinai and we were responsible to transmit it verbally to our children and the future generations. For a long period of our history, the only written books of Torah that existed were the twenty-four Seforim of Tanach. Rabeinu Bichaya (Ki Sisa 34:27) suggests that was to protect our exclusive rights to the Torah. The written Torah without its oral explanations cannot be understood properly. This changed, when Rabeinu HaKadosh boldly ruled to defy this prohibition

to preserve the eternity of Torah. However, even during the era of this prohibition, sections of the Haggadah were written. It was apparently viewed as a cornerstone of our Emunah, and a needed tool to transmit our storied redemption and faith.

קיטל

The Kittel

It is customary to wear a Kittel at the Seder. Many reasons are given for this Minhag. It is somewhat ironic, that the Kittel which is worn on Yom Kippur to instill us with fear, as it is the article of clothing that we are buried in (See Rem" a OC" H 609:3), has a place at our Seder.

Rav Shimon Schwab was once leading a Seder in his home. Sometime after the second cup of wine, the children began getting a little restless and giddy, detracting from the uplifting nature of the night. Rav Schwab turned very serious, grabbed onto the lapels of Kittel and cleared his throat. He said: "In this Kittel they will bury me. Tonight I am telling you a true story. It is no myth. It is no fairy tale. It really happened. And even it was the last day of my life, my final moments on earth, I would tell you this very story. Because it is Emes – unequivocally true".

Perhaps the Kittel is meant to lend credibility and sincerity to the words we impart to our children on this special night. As we don the sober garment, we declare that we will believe and convey this faith until our very last day.

It is customary for a married man to wear a Kittel at the Seder. There are different opinions regarding an Avel and Chosson in the first year of marriage. One who is unaware of his Minhag can wear it.

קערה

The Ke'arah

The Ke"arah or Seder Plate is typically placed in a prominent place on the table. Many themes of the night are arranged on this beautiful plate – each following their family Minhag. The prevalent Minhag seems to follow the layout of the Arizal, which is usually illustrated in the Haggada. They are meant to display the foods that the topics of the night revolve around. We point at the Matzah as we say “מצה זו” and at the Marror when we mention its reason.

We also roast a piece of chicken and an egg and place them on the Ke'arah. The roasted chicken is reminiscent of the Karbon Pesach and the egg of the Karbon Chagigah. These two Karbanos (Chagigah was brought together with Pesach – see Pesachim 114b and Rashi) are associated with the Matzah and Marror as the Pasuk (Beha'aloscha 9:11) states about the Karbon Pesach – “with Matzos and bitter herbs shall they eat it”. We therefore celebrate these two Karbanos specifically given their connection to the Mitzvos of the night. (Maharal Gevuras Hashem end of Perek 50)

The egg and chicken should be roasted before Yom Tov. If one forgets to do so, it can be done on Yom Tov, but must be eaten (even a little piece) the next day.

ארבעה כוסות

THE FOUR CUPS

At the Seder we drink four cups of wine. Each cup has its special place on this night as one is used while saying Kiddush, one to accompany Haggada, one for Bentching and the last one for Hallel. The number four corresponds to the four words that are used to describe the Geulah – והוצאתי והצלתי וגאלתי ולקחתי. (Beraishis Rabba 88). Alternatively,

they correspond to the four times the word כוס – cup - is mentioned by the Sar HaMashkim while relaying his dream to Yosef which subsequently led to the Geulah. (Yerushalmi Pesachim 10:1).

Rishonim (Tosafos Mordechai Perek 10 Pesachim) wonder why we don't commemorate the four expressions of Geula with four Matzahs and do so specifically with wine. Some suggest that being that a slave can never drink wine, as it intoxicates and will impede his ability to serve his master properly, the very act of drinking wine symbolizes freedom from slavery. The Meshech Chochmah (Va'era) suggests that there is nothing that symbolizes separation more than wine, as a non-Jew prohibits our wine by even touching it. And it was in the Zchus of this segregation that Klal Yisrael merited the Geula, as they didn't change their holy language, traditional clothing or Jewish names in Mitzrayim. This commitment to preserve their Jewish identity is celebrated best with wine – the icon of separation.

הסיבה

RECLINING/LEANING

The Matzah (for the Motzi Matzah, Korech and Afikoman) and cups of wine must be consumed while reclining to one's left side. This act demonstrates our freedom as slaves do not have the liberty to eat and drink so luxuriously. Additionally, the Rambam (Pirush HaMishna Pesachim 10:1) writes that on this night we are obligated to conduct ourselves as kings and dignitaries and need to follow their meal customs. The Rambam is teaching us that our celebration is beyond freedom from slavery. We also need to celebrate our title of *Mamleches Kohanim V'Goy Kadosh*, a kingdom of ministers and a holy nation; the transformation from slavery to ROYALTY, and to elaborate on the privilege of being a member of this special nation that we are part of.

Heseibah is done by reclining/leaning our entire body to the left side.
(Not just titling one's head)

Even lefties lean to the left.

Failing to do Heseibah can result in one needing to eat and drink again

which will be discussed at each section.

Women need not do Hesaibah but can do so if they choose. They cannot eat the Matzah while standing. If a woman forgets Heseibah, she does not need to redo the Mitzvah.

קדש

KADESH

Even those that have the Minhag to wash their hands before Kiddush on the night of the Seder they should not. (Mishnah Berurah 473:6). Although many people wash their hands before performing Mitzvahs, on the night of the Seder we deliberately leave our hands “impure” to commemorate our Geula from Mitzrayim, despite our impurities and unworthiness. We hope that this night will have its desired effect on us despite our shortcomings as well. (Avnei Nezer quoted by Shem M’Shmuel)

Although we begin every Shabbos and Yom Tov meal with Kiddush, on this night, it is unique and incorporated into the body of the Seder. There is a concept of Kiddush B’makom Seudah. Kiddush needs to be said followed immediately by the meal – without a time-lapse. Failure to do so disqualifies the Kiddush. Yet, on the night of Pesach there is a significant break – Karpas, and Haggada - between Kiddush and Matzah – the meal. The reason for this is due to the nature of Kiddush on Pesach and its relevance to Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim (recounting the exodus from Mitzrayim). The Rambam (Hilchos Shabbos 29:1) writes that the primary purpose of Kiddush is to describe the greatness of the day. Similarly, the Mitzvah of Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim is also meant to discuss the significance of the day – Pesach - and all of the miracles that occurred on this day. We can now view the Mitzvah of Kiddush, which is Zecher L’Yetzias Mitzrayim as well, and which describes the greatness of Pesach as the prelude to the Mitzvah of Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim. Everything that is said and done at the Seder is a continuation of the Kiddush which is Zecher L’Yetzias Mitzrayim and does not constitute a Hefsek. (Haggada of Rav Chaim Palagi)

It is customary for participants of the Seder to pour wine for each other as a sign of freedom.

Kiddush can only be made after nightfall (the earliest is 45 minutes after Shkiah).

Bechers should be rinsed inside and out before Kiddush.

Ideally red wine should be used. If this is difficult, it can be mixed with grape juice or water (in that order) maintaining at least ½ of wine. If necessary grape juice can be used.

The size of the Becher should be at least 4.42 ounces. If necessary one can use even a smaller cup of 2.9 ounces.

Ideally one should drink the majority of the cup at once or in a few successive gulps. Minimally, it must be drunk within 3-4 minutes.

One must drink with Hesaibah, in a reclining position to the left side. Failure to do so may require him to drink another cup. The first, third and fourth cups do NOT need to be drunk again. (Regarding the first cup, if one had in mind initially to drink between the first and second cup, he should drink another cup while leaning-no Beracha) If one forgot Hesaibah with the second cup, he should drink a cup of wine during the meal while leaning.

One should be mindful during Kiddush that he is fulfilling the Mitzvahs of Kiddush, the first of the cups and the beginning of Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim.

ךחחח

URCHATZ

We wash our hands, prior to eating a vegetable which came into contact with liquids, without a Beracha. Although we don't regularly practice this stringency, we do so as an added level of purification in accordance with the Kedusha of the night. Washing our hands is usually referred to as "Rachtzah", like later on in the Seder. The word Urchatz, with a "Vov", seems to imply that it is connected to the previous section, Kadesh. It is as if to say Kadesh and then Urchatz, unlike the rest of the Simanim of the night which are independent. Perhaps because this washing is also categorized as Kedusha, as it is not necessary halachically

and is done simply as an added act of Kedusha. The author of the Simanim is instructing us on the night of Pesach specifically, as we celebrate our elite status of being the chosen people - sanctify yourselves! Be holy! Go above and beyond. Wash! Wash for vegetables that you may not typically be careful to wash for (Rav Shlomo Zalmen Auerbach).

Additionally, there many Minhagim of the night that have been instituted to replicate a Seder that took place during the era of the Karbon Pesach, when the laws of Tuma'ah and Teharah were in effect (Netziv introduction to Haggada).

It is customary to bring a washing cup and basin to the table for leaders of the home to demonstrate our freedom.

EVEN THOUGH A BERACHA IS NOT SAID, ONE SHOULD NOT TALK BETWEEN WASHING AND EATING THE KARPAS VEGETABLE. (Poshut-based on Gemara Berachos (42a) see also Halichos Shlomo (9 footnote 183) and Kovetz Halachos (23:3)-Rav Shmuel Kaminetzky)

כרפס

KARPAS

This “snack” of a vegetable dipped into salt water serves multiple purposes. It is apparent that at one point there was an actual vegetable called “Karpas”. Chasam Sofer (Sh”ut Oc”h 132) testifies that his Rebbi Rav Nosson Adler worked tirelessly to try and identify what this vegetable is and ultimately reached the conclusion that it is what we know as celery. The reason this vegetable was chosen was because its letters, כ-ר-פ-ס, rearranged, can be read - ס' - פ ר ך , insinuating the six hundred thousand Yiden that were forced to work laboriously.

Additionally, the word “Karpas” according to Rabbeinu Man'ach (Chometz U'Matzah 8:2) alludes to the “*Kesones Pasim*”, the item that figured so prominently in the saga of Mechiras Yosef. Some Sefardic Haggadas add that dipping the Karpas in salt water corresponds to the

brothers dipping Yosef's jacket in goat's blood. This enlightening idea, incorporates Mechiras Yosef – the immediate cause of them entering Mitzrayim - into our recounting of the history – which otherwise appears to have been glaringly omitted.

My father Shlit" a often says, Karpas has no real reason; the Gemara (Pesachim 114b) says it is simply "K'dei She'Yishalu Ha'tinokos"- to encourage the children to ask. And it is in this way, that Karpas relates to Mechiras Yosef which happened precisely because of questions – or lack of thereof. The Shevatim were confused by their father's conduct- and they did not ask him about it. Chazal implemented this oddity specifically to encourage children to ask their parents about behavior they don't understand. In truth, this is really the essence of the Seder and the Mitzvah of V'higadeta L'vincha. The Torah aims to foster just such a relationship, whereby the children can ask any question in the world without being afraid of their father's response.

Almost any vegetable whose Beracha is Ha'adama (except Maror) is acceptable for Karpas – many people use carrots, radishes, potatoes or celery.

Ideally one should hold the vegetable in his hand.

Dip the vegetable into salt water or vinegar.

After dipping, make the Beracha and be mindful that this Beracha includes the Maror as well. If one forgot to have this in mind he should not make a Beracha on the Maror.

One should be careful not to eat more than a Kizayis-no larger than half an egg.

Custom is not to eat Karpas with Hesaibah.

YACHATZ

The leader of the Seder breaks the middle Matzah in two and places the smaller part back between the two whole Matzahs. The larger part is wrapped up (based on the Pasuk (Bo 12:34) “*their leftovers bound up in their garments*”-Rokeach) and put away for later use as the Afikoman.

The smaller half, similar to a poor man’s minimal portion, remains on the table for the duration of the Haggadah. This is done as a fulfillment of the “Devarim Harbeh” many words i.e. the Haggadah, over the “Lechem Ani” the poor man’s bread (Shulchan Aruch H’aRav 473:36).

The larger wrapped portion is put aside or hidden for the Afikomen. There is an age old custom of children “stealing” the Afikoman. Perhaps it is based on the Ba’er Heitev (473:19) who brings that one should place the Afikoman between the pillow and its cover (See Tzafun). Achronim suggest that this is a form of “safeguarding” the Afikoman as it is symbolic of the Korban Pesach (or Matzah) that needs “to be watched” (Har Tzvi Pesachim 34a). The children are put to the task of “testing” our ability to “watch” and safeguard the Matzah.

There is another beautiful Minhag with the Afikoman. Many people swing it over their shoulders, stand up and announce: this is how Klal Yisroel left Mitzrayim (See Magen Avraham 473:22 and Shulchan Aruch Harav 477:5). Others encourage their children to follow and walk around the house as if they were leaving Mitzrayim. The more exciting, the more animated and the more real it is, the greater the impact and impression our words will have on our children. *

Break the middle Matzah in two.

Place the smaller part back between the two whole Matzahs.

The larger piece is wrapped and put away for the Afikomen.

It is preferable that the piece left on the table is the size of a K’Zayis for the Beracha of Hamotzi.

* For a fascinating read, see Kaf HaChaim (473:123) “it is our custom to wrap the Matzah in a towel and tie it to the shoulder of a child. We then

proceeded to say “*Ha Lachma Anya etc.*”-this is the bread of affliction/
poor mans bread. The child would then knock on the front door of the
home.

“Who is it”? they would ask.

“A Jew” he responded.

“Where are you from”?

“Mitzrayim!”

“Where are you traveling to”?

“Yerushalayim”

“What are you carrying on your shoulder”?

“Matzah”

In Spink (Haggadah Nusach Spinka page 60 Minhagim) the conversation
was somewhat different. After the response that he is from Mitzrayim, he
was asked: “how is it possible that you are coming from Mitzrayim? It is
an unpenetrated fortress that no slave has ever breached and escaped.”
They would then jointly say, for tonight is Leil Shimurim, and on this
night Hashem took six hundred thousand people out of Mitzrayim.

In a similar vein, Chok Yaakov (477:1) quotes Pesach Mi’Uvim that
writes that it is his custom to take a walking stick, walking shoes and
proclaim - so shall you eat it, your belts tightened (ready for travel), your
shoes on your feet and your staff in your hand; you shall eat it in haste- it
is a Pesach for Hashem (Bo 12:11). He concludes that it was his practice,
to leave his belt tightened (it was usually loosened for meals) for the
duration of the Seder until after Afikoman.

מגיד

MAGGID

This is the primary Mitzvah of the night. It is when we recount what
happened in Mitzrayim to our children. *Vihigadita Libincha*, tell it
to your children. It is referred to as Maggid/Haggadah in contrast to
Amirah or Dibur.

Avudraham suggests that it is stylistically borrowed from (Ki Savo 26:3)

Higadity HaYom L'Hashem Elokecha etc. which is an expression of gratitude. We too, need to be thankful on this night.

In Lashon HaKodesh, every word is precise and accurately describes its intention. The difference between Amirah and Haggadah is that Amirah need not be fundamentally true while Haggadah must be. When Avraham Aveinu tells Sara to lie and say she is his sister, he says “*Imri Nah Achosi At*”, using Amirah. Haggadas Eidus, relating testimony in Bais Din, must be inherently true. (See Haggada Nagid V'Nafik-Rav B. Gittleson pg. 48 for an extensive discussion of this topic). [ועיי"ש ביאור נפלא בפסוקים פרשת לך לך יב' יח' יט' -מה זאת עשית לי למה לא הגדת לי כי אשתך היא: למה אמרת אחותי היא וגו']

A friend, that had recently entered his family's business, once revealed to the company's top salesman a flaw with one of their products. His father was uncharacteristically enraged. “You never tell a salesman, who is meant to sell with conviction, any kind of flaw with the product. Because if he doesn't believe in it, he won't be able to sell it well.”

On this night, we are charged to be “Maggidim”, to relate and recount our cherished history and faith. We need to ensure that this Emuna is firmly established in OUR hearts, to be able to be “Maggid” and “sell” it with inherent truth, to the next link of our precious chain.

Matzahs are uncovered when we say “*Ha Lachma Anya*” until Ma Nishtana.

The cup should be filled before reciting the Haggadah.

The Ma Nishtana is recited by children and adults alike, as well as the one conducting the Seder.

It is customary to cover the Matzahs and raise the Becher while saying V'ehi Sh'amda. We raise the cup as if to say - V'ehi - this wine, that signifies separation from the other Nations (see above four cups section quoting Meshech Chochmah) is what stood by our fathers etc. Uncover Matzah.

Many people have the custom of spilling out drops of wine, some with their forefinger, while mentioning each of the ten Makkoh's.

Perhaps the most important part of Maggid is *Rav Gamliel Haya Omer* etc. whoever has not explained the following three things.... Pesach, Matzah Maror etc.

Cover the Matzah and raise the Becher while saying *Lefikach etc.* until the conclusion of the Beracha Ga'al Yisrael. Minimally, one can raise the Becher during *Lefikach* and the Beracha and place it on the table for Hallel.

After Ga'al Yisrael, recite HaGafen and drink with Hesaibah. If one forgot Hesaibah with the second cup, he should drink a cup of wine during the meal while leaning.

רַחֲצָה

RACHTZAH

Although our hands are already “clean” from the washing before Karpas, we are required to wash again. This is out of concern that we were preoccupied with saying Haggadah and perhaps soiled our hands inadvertently.

Bais Yosef (Magid Maisharim Tzav) suggests that as we enter the next stage of the Seder with additional Mitzvahs, we want to prepare and elevate ourselves for the heightened levels of Kedusha. Washing hands is an act of increasing purity in anticipation of Kedusha, as it is written in Acharei Mos 16:19 “*and he shall purify it and sanctify it etc.*”.

It is customary to bring a washing cup and basin to the table for leaders of the home to demonstrate our freedom.

One must be careful not to talk between THE WASHING and the BERACHA, as well as after the Beracha-drying before eating.

מוציא-מצה

MOTZI-MATZAH

The mitzvah of eating Matzah is one of the Torah obligations of the night. The Chasam Sofer (Sh"ut Choshem Mishpat 196) writes that it is the last of the biblically commanded Mitzvahs of eating that is still relevant as we no longer are able to eat Karbanos, Terumah etc.; and he bemoans that it can only be performed once a year. Let us try and ensure that we fulfill it properly. (A lot has been written to clarify those words and this is not the forum for elaboration.)

The Matzah represents conflicting messages. On one hand it reminds us of the slavery food that we were fed IN MITZRAYIM. Being that it was cheap and filling, it was commonly used to feed slaves. (Ramban Re"ah 16:2 Avudraham and others. See however, Maharal (Gevuros Hashem 51) that emphatically refutes this.) On the other hand, it reminds us of liberation and freedom as we said in the Haggadah, *Raban Gamliel Haya Omer* etc.: because the dough of our fathers did not have time etc. and redeemed them etc., clearly symbolizing a remembrance of our freedom. However, the message of the Matzah is clear. Hashem works in mysterious ways. The bland bread that they awoke each morning to, which for hundreds of years represented bitter slavery, was suddenly transformed into the ultimate symbol of freedom. The hardships themselves are now icons of freedom.

We hold all three Matzahs and make the first Beracha, HaMotzi as we usually do on all bread that we eat. Being that it is unclear if the Beracha of HaMotzi is said on the upper Matzah or the broken one, we hold both and the third is for Lechem Mishna.

The bottom Matzah is put down and we now make the Beracha on the Mitzvah of Matzah.

One should have in mind that this Beracha is meant for the Korech and Afikomen as well.

One should not talk until after eating Korech.

Shulchan Aruch (475:1) rules that one needs to eat TWO KIZAYSIM, one Kizayis from each of the two Matzahs. However, Rav Moishe Feinstein ruled that this is ONLY relevant to the one making the Beracha

and one Kizayis is sufficient for all other participants. (Haggadah Kol Dodi 14:3)

It is difficult to provide any definitive Shiurim of Kizayis as every Matzah is made differently and has its own dimensions and thickness. As a general rule, one third of a hand Matzah and one half of a machine Matzah, are approximately a Kizayis.

It is almost impossible to give each participant the proper amount from the top two Matzahs, so other Matzahs should be available at the head of the table to complete the proper amount. However, each participant should get at least a small piece from each of the top two Matzahs.

Some people dip the Matzah in salt.

One needs to eat the Matzah with Hesaibah. If one forgets he must eat again, without a Beracha. (one Kizayis is sufficient)

Each participant is required to eat a Kizayis of Matzah within a few minutes. (Ideally within 4 minutes, if difficult-within 9 minutes)

מרור

MAROR

Maror is eaten to recall the bitterness of the slavery. The Mishna lists five species that are acceptable to be used for Maror. Some of the vegetables listed are not known to us today, but the prevalent tradition is that romaine lettuce, iceberg lettuce and horseradish are of the species listed.

The Hebrew word for horseradish is “*Taamcha*” and is seen as an acronym for *Tamid Mesaprim K’vod E-l*, (the creations of Hashem) constantly relate His honor (Chasam Sofer Sh”ut O”ch 132). Even the foods which remind us of our most difficult periods are ultimately singing Hashem’s praises.

Although the lettuce we eat for Maror is not bitter (See Chaya Adam 130:3 and Aruch Hashulchan 473:16) it is still reminiscent of our bitter slavery. Chazal (Toras Kohanim Behar 7) relate that there was an emotionally demeaning aspect to the slavery as well. Besides burdening the women with crushing physical labor they also degraded the strong

men with light women-like chores. So although it was physically easy and not so “bitter”, it was destructively emotionally (Chofetz Chaim, *Darchei Yisrael-Shaar Avodas Hashem* 5).

Additionally, it can be suggested that there are times when one becomes content with even the most demeaning of situations. It may even reach the point where they can forget that dignity and normalcy still exist. This element, at times, can be worse than the difficult predicament itself. And perhaps, it is this aspect of the slavery that we are trying to remember.

The Maror vegetable needs to be eaten raw. Any lettuce or horseradish that has been soaked for 24 hours is unacceptable due to the principle of Kavush K’Mevushal; soaking or pickling is equivalent to cooking. This usually disqualifies conventionally prepared horseradish as well.

Eating Maror nowadays is only D’Rabbanan-a Rabbinic requirement as biblically it is dependent upon the Karbon Pesach. Therefore, one may be more lenient with Shiurim.

Approximately one large lettuce leaf is sufficient.

Many people have the custom to combine ground horseradish with the lettuce. Being that one is fulfilling the Mitzvah with the lettuce, it is not necessary to consume a full Kizayis of horseradish. If one wishes to do so, the Shiur would be anywhere between .28cc and .38.3cc. (A standard “shot glass” is 1 ounce. So somewhere between one half and two thirds of that size cup.)

We dip the Maror into Charoses and shake it off to ensure the sweetness of the Charoses does not subdue the bitterness of the Maror.

One should keep in mind the Maror of Korech when making the Beracha on the Maror.

One does not eat Maror with Hesaibah.

Each participant is required to eat a Kizayis of Maror within a few minutes. (Ideally within 4 minutes, if difficult-within 9 minutes)

כורח

KORECH

The bottom (thus far unbroken) Matzah is taken and we sandwich the Matzah and Maror together as Hillel did during the times of the Bais HaMikdash. However, he did this alongside the Karbon Pesach which we sadly can no longer do. This remembrance is done precisely at this junction of the Seder, as we just concluded eating the Maror, which due to the lack of the Karbon Pesach, is only a Mitzvah D'Rabbanan.

A similar idea is found in Sukkah (41a). The Mishnah teaches that after the destruction of the Bais HaMikdash, Rav Yochanan Ben Zakkai instituted the Lulav to be taken all seven days, even outside the Bais HaMikdash as a remembrance; and it should be forbidden to eat from the new crops the entire day of “waving” the Omer, with the hope that the Bais HaMikdash will be rebuilt speedily. The correlation between these two Takanos is puzzling (See Tosafos ibid). Imrei Emes (quoted in Sefer Daf Al Daf Sukkah ibid) suggests that after Rav Yochanan Ben Zakkai instituted the Lulav to be taken all seven days, as a permanent reminder of what was, the Nation was overcome with great despair. They sensed that the Galus will be a lengthy ordeal and were deeply saddened. So, to encourage their optimism and boost their spirit, he immediately instituted a Takkana of hope.

On this night as well, as we conclude the now Mitzvah D'Rabbanan of Maror, we are saddened. Saddened by the lack of Karbon Pesach and the biblical Mitzvahs associated with it. So we replicate what was done and conclude with a prayer, based on Yerushalmi (Pesachim 9:1) that if the Bais HaMikdash will be built before Pesach Sheini, the entire Klal Yisroel will bring a Karbon Pesach to exhibit our hopes for a proper Pesach, may it be soon Amen. It may be for this reason that we chose the Pesukim associated with Karbon Pesach Sheini (Beha'aloscha) to say with the Korech, and not the similar Pesukim (Bo) that describe the Pesach Rishon.

We take two pieces from the bottom Matzah and sandwich the Maror

in between them.

It is almost impossible to give each participant the proper amount from the bottom Matzah, so other Matzahs should be available at the head of the table to complete the proper amount. However, each participant should get at least a small piece from the bottom Matzah.

Both the Matzah and Maror need to be a Kizayis. However, the smaller measurements for Matzah can be used; (Mishnah Berurah 486:1) approximately $\frac{1}{6}$ of a hand Matzah and $\frac{1}{4}$ of a machine Matzah. For Maror; either one large lettuce leaf (approximately) or between .28cc and .38.3cc. of horseradish. (A standard "shot glass" is 1 ounce. So somewhere between one half and two thirds of that size cup.)

In extreme circumstances, one can even use less than a Kizayis of Maror for Korech. (Kol Dodi, Orchos Rabeinu vol. 2 pg. 75 and Kovetz Halachos Rav Shmuel Kaminetzky 30:2)

There are different customs whether one dips the Korech in Charoses. Even if one does dip, it should be shaken off.

Korech is eaten with Hesaibah. If forgotten, one does NOT need to eat again.

Each participant is required to eat Korech within a few minutes. (Ideally within 4 minutes, if difficult-within 9 minutes)

Many people say "*Zecher K'Hillel*" only after eating Korech to avoid an unnecessary Hefsek. However, others allow it to be said even before eating Korech.

שולחן עורף

SHULCHAN ORECH

The meal should be eaten joyously as the Torah states - *V'samachta B'chagecha* - you shall rejoice on your festival. There is an obligation to eat meat and drink wine at every Yom Tov meal (Mishnah Berurah 529:11). However, there is a dispute if the Mitzvah of Simcha begins on the eve of Yom Tov or only during the day (See Shaagas Aryeh 68). The Chazon Ish (Oc"ch 129) in a novel approach, suggests that the first night of Pesach is unique in this regard; due to the joy that was associated

with the bringing of the Korban Pesach, and there is in fact a Simcha obligation. Rav Yose (Pesachim 117a) proves that the origin of Hallel was Moshe, not Dovid, by stating - is it possible that during all the years from the Exodus, until Dovid's times, the Yiden Shechted (slaughtered) their Korban Pesach etc. and did not sing songs of Hallel? Surely not! Such was the joy associated with the Korban Pesach.

There is a Minhag to eat a hardboiled egg at Shulchan Orech (R"ema 476:2). Many people dip the egg in saltwater. One of the many reasons given is because of the similarities between a hardboiled egg and Klal Yisroel. Nearly all foods, the longer they are cooked in water, the softer they become. The exception to this rule is the egg. The longer it is boiled, the more time it remains on the fire, the harder it becomes. What an appropriate analogy for our Nation! We are committed to our heritage despite the countless oppressions, furnaces and gas chambers that we have had to endure. Not only were we not weakened somehow we emerged stronger, hardened and more committed (Rav Meir Shapiro).

Although it is praiseworthy to eat the entire meal with Hesaibah, the common custom is not to.

It is customary to eat a hardboiled egg at the Seder meal. It is not necessary to eat the egg off the Ke'arah.

One should not eat any roasted (even pot roasted) or grilled meat/chicken at the Seder.

One should be mindful not to overeat at the Seder meal as it will prevent him from eating the Afikoman with an appetite. If one is so sated that he must force himself to eat it, he will not fulfill the Mitzvah of Afikoman, which is considered by some Rishonim to be the main Mitzvah of Matzah.

One should be mindful of the time to ensure the Afikoman will be eaten before Chatzos.

צפון

TZAFUN

At the end of the Seder meal, we eat Matzah as a remembrance of the Korban Pesach that was eaten after the meal. The word “Afikoman” actually means “that which comes after” or “dessert” and is used here simply to allude to “*Ein Maftirin Achar HaPesach Afikoman*”, the prohibition of eating any dessert after it (Shiltei Giborim Pesachim 10). Alternatively, it is called Afikoman because of its fondness, like a sweet dessert after a meal (Levush 478:1).

This section of the Seder is called Tzafun, hidden. The Ba’er Heitev (473:19) brings that one should place the Afikoman between the pillow and its cover. Achronim suggest that this is a form of “safeguarding” the Afikoman as it is symbolic of the Korban Pesach (or Matzah) that needs “to be watched” (Har Tzvi Pesachim 34a). As we mentioned earlier (Magid), in Lashon HaKodesh, every word is precise and accurately describes its intention. There are two ways for one to hide an object. One is to bury it deep underground and completely forget about it; a bona fide cover-up. The other way is to conceal it, but still be mindful of it. One may even choose to stand off in the distance and observe it. When Yocheved gave birth to Moshe and needed to conceal his existence, the Pasuk (Shemos 2:2) says *V’tizpinehu*, and she hid him. This was obviously the type of hiding that completely consumed her mind. On this night, as we reach the point of remembering the Korban Pesach with only Matzah, we remove it from where it was “hiding” and refer to it as “*Tzafun*” indicating our mindfulness of this special Korban.

Afikoman should be eaten before Chatzos.

If the Afikoman gets lost, one can take any other Matzah in its place.

Ideally one should eat two Kizayisim of Matzah for Afikoman. However, if this is difficult, one Kizayis is sufficient.

Being that Afikoman is M’drabbanan, one can rely on the smaller measurement of Kizayis and two “small” Kizaysim is equivalent to the one “larger” measurement that was used by Motzi Matzah; approximately 1/3 of a hand Matzah and ½ of a machine Matzah.

Afikoman is eaten with Hesaibah. If one forgot, if remembered before Bentsching (or Mayim Acharonim) one should eat the Afikoman again.

If not, he does not have to eat again.

One is not permitted to eat or drink (besides the remaining cups of wine) after the Afikoman. Water, seltzer-reg. or flavored, (NOT soda), lemonade or tea are permitted. (Rav Shmuel Kaminetzky).

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BARECH

The third cup is poured and Birchas HaMazon is said. Tosafos (Berachos 42a) refers to the Seder meal as “the table of Hashem”, (this concept has Hallachic ramifications as well; see Shulchan Aruch 477:2) and should increase our feelings of gratitude while Bentching. Additionally, being that Matzah is the only remaining biblical Mitzvah to eat a specific food, one can appreciate the Birchas HaMazon of this night that much more.

Halacha encourages us to eat the Seder with three adults to allow for Bentching with a Mezuman (479:1). And although many interpret that this is only relevant for Hallel (Mishnah Berurah; *ibid*) the Netziv (Haggadah Imrei Shefer) feels that even Zimun is specifically relevant to the Seder. The concept of Zimun is the invitation of one person to two other people to give a Beracha to Hashem for the food they have eaten. They have the ability to unite as one unit in the fulfillment of a Mitzvah, and this was made possible on the night we left Mitzrayim. We celebrate the birth of our Nation of caring brothers and sisters. Zimun too, is an appreciation of Yetzias Mitzrayim.

Wash the cups inside and out and pour the third cup.

It is customary that the Ba'al HaBayis leads the Bentching on the first night.

Bentching is said over the third cup.

Drink the third cup with Hesaibah. If forgotten, one does NOT drink again.

כוס של אליהו

CUP OF ELIJAHU

The fourth cup is poured. According to most customs, the cup of Eliyahu is poured now as well. The front door is opened and *Shfoch Chamascha* is said. Some have the custom to call out “Baruch Habbah” to “Eliyahu”, as an act of strengthening our Emunah that the month of Nisan is the month of Geulah (Aruch Hashulchan 480:1). Others simply call out: *Leil Shimurim!*

There is a widespread custom to add a cup for Eliyahu at the Seder. There is no source in Chazal for this Minhag, but many Mefarshim offer various explanations for it. There are three categories of reasons.

- 1) Being that he may very well arrive to herald the end of our Galus.
- 2) Eliyahu visits every Seder in spirit.
- 3) He makes no appearance whatsoever, there are symbolic or practical reasons for this cup.

For an elaboration on this topic, see Artscroll’s Eliyahu Hanavi book, written by my father in law Shlit”a, chapter 37.

הלל

HALLEL

Hallel on Seder night is unique. We recite the first half of Hallel before we drink the second cup and then complete the remaining parts over the fourth cup. The first section of Hallel is specific to the generation of Yetzias Mitzrayim and is related to the general Mitzvah of Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim. The second part of Hallel deals primarily with other Geulos as well as the ultimate Geula and is therefore separated on this night.

Additionally, Tosafos (Sukkah 38a) is of the opinion that women,

who are generally not obligated to say Hallel, are in fact obligated to say Hallel at the Seder because they too were included in this great miracle. Tosafos can be understood that the Hallel of the Seder is one that people who experience an actual miracle need to say - *V'Nomar L'fanav Shirah Chadasha* - let us therefore, recite a new song before Him! Such is the level of Simcha on this night as we rejoice with song, as if it happened to us (Emek Beracha-Haggadah 3).

The door is closed and the Haggadah continues with Hallel.

The Ba'al H'bayis should lead the Hallel and we recite Hodu and Anna Hashem as in Shul, with responsive reading.

The cup does need to be held throughout Hallel.

One can sing songs with the words of Hallel and even repeat complete Pesukim.

One can offer explanations to the words of Hallel while it is being said, at the end of Pesukim.

Drink the fourth cup with Heseibah. If forgotten, one does NOT drink again.

נִרְצָה

NIRTZAH

The inspiring Seder comes to a close with *Chasal Sidur Pesach* and songs of praise. Some of the lyrics may appear to be meaningless and even childish like. However, as mentioned above (The Seder) even the songs and poems are all rooted in the deepest and most mystical parts of Torah. The Chidah (Chaim Shial vol. one – 28) rules based on an incident where one mocked the legitimacy of these “poems”, that he is in fact deserving of the Cherem – ban/excommunication - that was levied upon him.

“Who knows one?” seems to be just another one of those rhymes. At the conclusion of the Seder, we would expect a lofty and uplifting climax, some sort of “grand finale” that would enable us to preserve

and internalize the spirituality of the night. Instead we encounter some seemingly strange lyrics, a countdown of numbers related to various icons in our religion. However, following our extensive efforts to utilize the evening's opportunities of attaining new heights in our belief, and deriving a keen spiritual perspective by way of virtually experiencing the great miracles of Yetzias Mitzrayim, we are expected to perceive the world in a more spiritual light. Just as we naturally assume, without contemplation, that an overseas trip will be by means of an airplane, people of spiritual heights, hearing the number one, can naturally contemplate nothing but Hashem. The lasting message of the Seder to its now loftier participants, with their Emuna enhanced perspectives, is to see Hashem's hand even in things as mundane as numbers. One is Hashem, two are Luchos etc. The world must appear in a different light to freshly inspired Baalei Emuna.

May we, Baalei Emuna, be Zocheh to see the world in the light of Hashem and pray that our Seder was in fact Nirtzah, desirable, in the eyes of Hashem.

It is customary to recite Shi HaShirim after the Seder.

One should attempt to stay up and learn about Yetzias Mitzrayim until he is overcome by sleep.

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כּוּס שֶׁל אֵלִיָּהוּ
THE CUP OF ELIJAHU

There is a widespread custom throughout the Jewish world to place and pour a special cup of wine on the table at the Pesach Seder. No one present drinks from the cup and it is called *בוס של אליהו*, *the Cup of Eliyahu*.

In truth, *Chazal* make no mention of this tradition and thus there is no definitive source for its origin. This chapter will present some of the reasons provided by various commentators, which fall into three categories.

(A) The Seder night is when Eliyahu may very well appear in the flesh to herald the end of our *Galus*. We therefore place a cup of wine in his name as a symbol of our faith that he will arrive; or, because he like all other Jews will have the obligation to drink wine on the Seder night, we prepare it in advance for our anticipated guest.

(B) Eliyahu visits every Seder in spirit form, just as he attends every *bris milah*. Knowing that so exalted a visitor will grace our homes, we put out a cup of wine in his honor.

(C) Although Eliyahu makes no appearance, corporeally or otherwise, there are symbolic and/or practical reasons for preparing the cup.

The Safest of Nights — an Auspicious Time for Geulah

There is a Midrash¹ that on the Seder night, Eliyahu together with Mashiach will make their long-awaited appearance.

מה ראָה לומר (שמות יב:מב) "ליל שמרים?" שבו עשה גדלה לצדיקים כשם שעשה לישראל במצרים. בו הציל לחזקיהו, ובו הציל לחנניה וחבריו, ובו הציל לדניאל מגב אריות, ובו משיח ואליהו מתגדליו. שנאמר (ישעיה כא:יב) "אמר שמר אתה בקר וגם לילה."

Why is it written (Shemos 12:42), "A night of protection?" For on it He did great things for the righteous, just as He did for Israel in Egypt.² On it He saved Chizkiyahu³ and on it He saved Chananiah and his friends⁴ and on it He saved Daniel from the

1. *Shemos Rabbah* 18:12.

2. The exegesis that the first night of Passover would be auspicious for the righteous is based upon either the plurality of the word *שמרים*, *protections*, and/or because the verse ends with *ליל* *It is a night of protection for all the Children of Israel for their generations.* The words *ליל שמרים הוא לה'*, *It is a night of protection for Hashem*, also appear at the beginning of the verse. But as that relates to the Almighty, *shimurim* is understood by *Rashi* not as a night of protection, but as *a night of anticipation* for which He eagerly awaited, to redeem His children from Egypt.

3. When Sancheriv came to attack Yerushalayim, as in *Il Melachim* Ch. 19.

4. Mishael and Azariah, as in *Daniel* 3.

lions' den⁵ and on it, Mashiach and Eliyahu will be exalted.⁶ For it is written (Yeshayahu 21:12), "The Watchman said, 'Morning is coming, but also night.'"⁷

This Midrash concurs with and elaborates upon the opinion of Rav Yehoshua, who says:⁸ בְּיֵסֶן נִגְאָלוּ בְּיֵסֶן עֲתִידִין לְגָאֵל. In [the month of] Nissan they were redeemed, in Nissan they are destined to be redeemed. The miraculous night following the fourteenth of Nissan ushered in Israel's exit to true freedom back in Egypt and proved to be a night of wonders in future generations as well. How fitting, then, that it should prove to be the ultimate night of protection that will initiate the end of our people's suffering forever.

With this Midrash in mind, the earliest known explanation for the custom to prepare the Cup of Eliyahu is offered by Rav Zelikman of Benga.

וְהִנֵּה רְאִיתִי יֵשׁ בְּנֵי אָדָם בְּלֵיל הַפֶּסַח שְׂמוֹזְגִין כּוֹס מִיַּחַד וּמִעֲמִידֵין עַל הַשֻּׁלְחָן וְאוֹמְרִים שְׂזֵה הַכּוֹס לְאַלְיָהוּ הַנְּבִיא. וְלֹא יִדְעוּתִי מֵאַיִן זֶה הַטַּעַם. וְנִרְאֶה דֶּהֲטַעַם יוֹצֵא מִהֶכָּא. שְׂאֵם יָבֵא אֱלֹהֵי הַנְּבִיא בְּלֵיל פֶּסַח כְּאֲשֶׁר אָנוּ מְקוּיִם וּמְחַכִּים לוֹ בְּזֶה הַלַּיְלָה, וְצָרִיךְ גַּם הוּא לְכוֹס. . . דְּאֶפְלוּ עָנִי שְׂבִישְׂרָאֵל לֹא יִפְחָתוּ לוֹ מֵאַרְבַּע כּוֹסוֹת. וְאִי לֹא הָיָה כּוֹס מוֹכֵן לְשֵׁם אִם כֵּן צָרִיכִים אָנוּ לְהַתְעַסֵּק לוֹ בְּכוֹס וְדִלְמָא יִמְנַע מִסֻּדְרָא שֶׁל פֶּסַח. וְכָל הַמְרַבֵּה לְסַפֵּר בִּיצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם הָרִי זֶה מְשֻׁבָּח.

I have seen that there are people who pour a special cup on the night of Pesach⁹ and place it upon the table and say that this cup is for Eliyahu HaNavi. And I do not know from where this originates. It appears that the reason originates from here: If Eliyahu HaNavi would come on the night of Pesach — as we hope and anticipate on this night — he would also need a cup [to drink]. For even a pauper in Israel should have no less than

5. As in Daniel Ch. 6.

6. According to Radal and Eitz Yosef, the correct text is מְתַגְלִין, they will be revealed. Even without a change in the actual text, the intent of the Midrash seems to be that they will actually appear in the flesh. (This Midrash disagrees with the clearly stated opinion of Eruvin 43b that Eliyahu and Mashiach will not arrive concurrently. It also sides with the position (questioned by Rav Chaninah, ibid., 43a and elucidated below in Chapter 38, under the heading, *Opinion of the Baal HaManhig*) as to whether or not there are halachic boundaries ten handbreadths above the ground. Clearly, in the opinion of this Midrash there are none; thus Eliyahu and Mashiach will not be violating the 2,000-cubit limitation when they travel — in the flesh — to Earth on Yom Tov.)

7. That is to say, the Almighty proclaims that redemption (morning) is nigh, as is the night on which it is to occur.

8. See *Rosh Hashanah* 11a. R' Eliezer, however, contends that the redemption will take place in Tishrei. Indeed, Rav Yehoshua cites (ibid., 11b) the verse of לַיְלַת שְׂמָרִים as proof that the night of Pesach is לַיְלַת שְׂמָרִים וְכֵן מִשְׁשֶׁת יָמֵי בְרֵאשִׁית, a night set aside [for redemption] since the six days of Creation.

9. It was clearly not such a widespread custom in those days.

four cups. Now if no cup is prepared [in advance], then we would have to busy ourselves with the cup [when he arrives] and it would perhaps detract from the Seder. And the more one tells over the story of Exodus, the greater the praise.

How deep and sincere was, and is, the faith of our people! In the opinion of Rav Zelikman, the anticipation for Eliyahu is so palpable, that we say, “Surely tonight is the hour of his arrival. Let us prepare wine for him, as he too will need to drink!”

It may also be that the words of this Midrash are the backdrop for the ruling of the *Rema*,¹⁰ בְּדִי לְזִכֹּר שֶׁהוּא לַיִל שֶׁמוֹדִים וּבְזִכּוֹת אֲמוּנָה זוֹ יָבֵא, *And the door is opened [for שֹׁפֵר הַמִּתְדָּק] to remind us that it is a night of protection, and in the merit of that faith, Mashiach will come and he will pour his wrath upon those who oppose Hashem.* The *Mishnah Berurah* explains: וְאֵין מִתְיָרְאִין מִשֵּׁים דְּבַר, [by opening the door we show] that we are not afraid of anything. Then the Chofetz Chaim adds: וְנוֹהֲגִין בְּאֵלוֹ מְדִינוֹת לְמִגַּג כּוֹס אֶחָד יוֹתֵר מִהַמְסַבִּין וְקוֹרִין אוֹתוֹ כּוֹס שֶׁל אֱלֹהֵי הַנְּבִיא לְרַמּוֹ שֶׁאֵנוּ מְאֲמִינִים שֶׁכֶּשֶׁם שֶׁגָּאֵלְנוּ הַשֵּׁם יִתְבָּרַךְ מִמִּצְרַיִם הוּא יִגְאֵלְנוּ עוֹד וְיִשְׁלַח לָנוּ אֶת אֱלֹהֵינוּ לְבִשְׂרֵנוּ. *It is customary in these lands to pour one cup more than the number of those reclining [i.e., those participating in the meal] and it is called the Cup of Eliyahu to indicate that we believe that just as Hashem redeemed us from Egypt, He will once again redeem us and will send Eliyahu to bring us that message.*

Incredibly, the hours just spent recounting the story of *Yetzias Mitzrayim* and our rejuvenated faith in both God’s existence and His awesome power do *not* seem to be enough for us to merit the *Geulah*. We need to display that our trust, our *bitachon* in God, is more than just lip service. We must exhibit our total confidence in His protection on this night, at this unique moment of the year when we are guaranteed to be safe from any harm. In Egypt, Israel, and Babylonia our Father in Heaven — in wondrous fashion — shielded us from harm. Throughout our turbulent history on this night, we were and are God’s chosen ones and until dawn arrives ... we are untouchable! Even those of us fortunate enough to live in a time and place where the apprehension of opening doors is nonexistent, we must strive for a level of trust in the Almighty that were danger to lurk outside, we would not fear it. That is the exalted level of faith expressed by the *Rema* that will help us truly merit to see Mashiach, who will permanently destroy our enemies and usher in days of serenity and eternal peace.

How appropriate, then, that we symbolize our anticipation and trust in the *Geulah* at the Seder by placing a cup of wine — a cup we call כּוֹס שֶׁל אֱלֹהֵינוּ — upon our tables. For we recognize that a precious, fleeting window

10. *Shulchan Aruch, Hilchos Pesach* 470:1.

of opportunity exists for us to accrue extra merit to hasten our beloved prophet's entering through our portals to herald the imminent arrival of Mashiach ben David.

Bris Milah, a Prerequisite for the Korban Pesach

Although there is a positive commandment for every Jewish male to be circumcised,¹¹ a non-circumcised Jew can fulfill virtually all the mitzvos of the Torah. Nevertheless, when it comes to the *Korban Pesach*, the Torah writes,¹² וְכָל עָרֵל לֹא יֹאכַל בּוֹ, *no uncircumcised male may eat of it*.¹³ Based upon this unique restriction, *Maharam Chagiz* offers a novel approach, paraphrased as follows:

And regarding the preparation of the Cup of Eliyahu, may he be remembered for good, it [is a custom that] has roots below and beautiful branches above. For you are certainly aware of the reason that a special chair is prepared for Eliyahu on the occasion of a bris milah and that he is known as the Malach HaBris. For he has been granted a reward in that the mouth that spoke negatively about Israel for abandoning its covenant is the same mouth that validates and testifies on behalf of Israel, for he is now transformed into the advocate who witnesses that Israel fulfills [the commandment of] circumcision.

*With that we can understand the custom in Israel to prepare for him on the night of Pesach a cup of faith and a place to recline and a set table, upon which Israel fulfills the obligation of the Pesach. For one of the statutes and upright laws of the Almighty is that anyone uncircumcised may not eat from it, even someone whose brothers died because of their bris milah.*¹⁴

Thus, there is no doubt that blessing will come, for Eliyahu zachur latov, will come to every home in Israel to see the fulfillment of one commandment which is actually two, Pesach and milah. And he ascends on our behalf to heaven to advocate on behalf of the community and individuals to hasten and accelerate their redemption and the liberation of their souls with the final Geulah.

And if these reasons are found in other sefarim, Hashem the Judge knows

11. A father has a special obligation to either circumcise his son or arrange for his son's *bris*. However, if he fails to do so and no one from the community arranges for the child's *bris*, then when the child becomes an adult, the mitzvah becomes his own obligation.

12. *Shemos* 12:48.

13. Though an uncircumcised male may also not eat *terumah* or *kodashim*, those prohibitions are derived from the *Korban Pesach* (see *Rashi* to *Pesachim* 61b).

14. I.e., the exclusion is not to be understood as a punishment for non-fulfillment of a commandment. Even a Jew who is exempt from being circumcised because it would endanger his life cannot partake of the *Korban Pesach*.

that I have not seen them until now and I have merited sharing life with them. But let these [novel Torah thoughts] be attributed to them.

To know that Eliyahu HaNavi — in spirit form — traverses the globe on the night of Pesach to further fulfill his mandate as the *Malach HaBris* and to reinforce the special bond the nation of Israel has with God ... is reassuring. True, we are unable to sacrifice the *Korban Pesach* in our day, but we have an indefatigable advocate who argues before the Master of the World, “Your children uphold the mitzvah of *bris milah* and are primed and ready to once again sacrifice the *Korban Pesach*. Please redeem them from exile so that they indeed may do so!”

Four or Five Cups

There is a dispute among the *Geonim* and *Rishonim*¹⁵ if the proper Seder tradition is to drink four cups of wine or five cups. The source of the disagreement is whether or not the correct text of a Baraisa reads, *בּוֹס הַמַּיִשִּׁי*, *fifth cup*, or *בּוֹס רְבִיעִי*, *fourth cup*. As we are unsure whether we are required to drink a fifth cup or not, most halachic authorities rule that we are *not* to do so out of doubt. It is reputed¹⁶ that the Vilna Gaon explained that the custom of *בּוֹס שָׁל אֵלֶיָּהוּ* is due to this question. Because we are unsure as to whether a fifth cup is needed, we pour a fifth cup but do not drink from it. It is referred to as the *Cup of Eliyahu* because, as with all other halachic uncertainties, when he arrives to herald the *Geulah*, Eliyahu will reveal to us the correct Torah ruling regarding the fifth cup as well.

A Receptacle for Leftovers

Rav Chaim Benveniste¹⁷ provides a utilitarian reason for the custom of the extra cup. Once one drinks from a cup of wine, the leftover wine in that cup is considered *pagum*, tainted, and may not be used for a mitzvah. The generally accepted halachic opinion is that if fresh wine is added to that cup, the wine may now be used. However, some are of the opinion that adding fresh wine does not allow the wine to be used.¹⁸ According to those opinions, once one drank any of the four cups of wine at the Seder, any wine left in his cup should be emptied, but it must not be poured back into the

15. *Pesachim* 118a. See *Tur, Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim* 471 at length.

16. See *Divrei Eliyahu (Parashas Va'eira)*.

17. *Pesach Meuwil*, 182.

18. See *Mordechai to Mesechta Berachos (Os 183)*.

large wine pitcher, for it would taint the entire pitcher. He then adds that he observed the custom of some Ashkenazic Jews who would place an empty cup on their table into which they poured the wine that was left in their cups. They referred to the cup as כוס שֶׁל אֵלִיָּהוּ. He comments that the custom pleased him and that he too would do so. He concludes by saying that he would drink the wine from this Cup of Eliyahu during the meal.¹⁹

Why Eliyahu's name would be applied to a cup of leftovers is not explained. In fact, *Maharam Chagiz* quotes this custom, but condemns associating such a mundane practice with the name of the great Eliyahu HaNavi. Perhaps it can be suggested that — as with the question of four or five cups — it was referred to as the Cup of Eliyahu simply because the need for a receptacle is a matter of halachic dispute and we await Eliyahu's ruling on the matter.

19. When not being used for a mitzvah, tainted wine is not an issue.

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