



The Seder ILLUMINATED

FOURTH EDITION ♦ NEWLY REVISED & EXPANDED

Seder & Haggadah Guide
- with Divrei Torah & Practical Halachos -

Rabbi Ari Levitan

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



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EXCERPT OF “ELIYAHU HANAVI” BY R’ AVRAHAM YOM TOV ROTENBERG - PAGES 50-57



Baruch Hashem, this booklet was received warmly and, based on the positive feedback, proved to be useful. In this year's edition, I have made minor corrections and a few more additions; I am hopeful that this small booklet will have a large impact on your Seder. I am grateful to my dear friend, Hagaon Rav Yitzchak Miller Shlit"a Rav of The Prospect Vines community in Lakewood, for sharing his precious time reviewing and sharing his wealth of knowledge with me.

ערב פסח תשפ"ג



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 - on 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. See below, *Korech*, for a similar idea by the Meshech Chochma.

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!

Wishing you and your families a חג כשר ושמח



Rabbi Ari Levitan

תענית בכורות

TAANIS BECHOROS

It is customary for Bechoros, first born males of the family, to fast on Erev Pesach. The source for this Taanis is found in Maseches Sofrim (21:3), yet no reason is given there for this fast. Additionally, this Minhag is noticeably absent in the writings of the majority of Rishonim. The Raavya and the Tur (470) do quote it and suggest that the reasoning for this fast is to memorialize their miracle of being spared during Makkas Bechoros. Mefarshim wonder at the nature of this memorialization, as it would seem more befitting and appropriate to commemorate this momentous event in a celebratory manner, as it is typically done rather than with fasting. Perhaps, upon closer examination of the wording in Maseches Sofrim (ibid), quoted by Bais Yosef OC”H (429:2), this puzzling Minhag can be clarified. After detailing the special events which occurred and which will IYH occur during the Month of Nisan, Maseches Sofrim continues to explain that this is the reason why Tachanun is not said, and one should not fast during this month. “For this reason, that most of the month contained festive days... no Tachanun is said on any of the days of Nisan and there is no fasting until Nisan has passed. The only exception is [the fast of] the firstborn who fast on the eve of Pesach in thanksgiving of their rescue on the night of Pesach and the very pious people, on account of the Matzah, in order that they shall eat it in the evening with relish”. It appears from the wording that the desired effect of the fast is not accomplished on Erev Pesach by restricting the consumption of food, rather its purpose is to enable the performance of the Mitzvos ON PESACH EVE, in an elevated manner. Hence, the Bechoros do commemorate in celebratory and festive fashion. (See Rav Eliyahu Levine in Divrei Shirah Pesach 47 for an elaboration of this approach, while failing to bring the actual wording of Maseches Sofrim which seem to indicate this very idea.)

Rav Shlomo Zalmen Auerbach (Halichos Shlomo Pesach 8 footnote 1) suggests a novel idea of the origin of this fast day. The Medrash (BMD”R 3:5) states that initially, the Avodah was performed by the firstborn. However, after they sinned by bringing the Karbonos as servitude of the Eigel, they

were subsequently disqualified and replaced by the Kohanim and Leviim who had not sinned. Yet this replacement was not eternal, and they still retain a connection to the Avodah, awaiting the day that it will be returned to them, to work harmoniously alongside the Kohanim and Leviim (Ohr Hachaim Beraishis 49:28). The presence of the Kohanim in the Mikdash, and every element of their Avodah, served as a stark reminder of this punishment to the Bechoros and of their demotion. This frustration would peak on Erev Pesach – the busiest day of the year in the Bais Hamikdash. The Kohanim and Leviim would be front and center in this grand glorification of Hashem's name while the Bechoros were sidelined. Their longing to participate and contribute to this remarkable event was so intense they simply could not put any food in their mouths. The pain was too great; the bitterness was too harsh. And it was then that this fast was instituted, to memorialize their deep longing of doing the Avodah, and closeness to Hashem, reaching the point they were simply unable to eat. Truly a day and milestone to remember. See Levush OC”H 490,9 for a fascinating discussion of the reasoning behind the mystifying acronyms used for the Torah readings on Pesach (Mashuch Tura, Kadesh B’Kaspa, Pesel B’Midbara, Shalach Buchra) and how it relates to the Bechoros being stripped of their Avodah privileges.

קרבן 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, Rav 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. (See Meshech Chochma (Beha'alosecha 9:7) who delineates the various unique aspects of the Korban Pesach. Among them, he stresses, that the Korban Pesach highlights the importance of the individual; how each and every member of Bnei Yisrael is worthy and deserving of a direct connection with Hashem, with no need for an intermediary. This is expressed in the Halachos of the Korban, specifically since the Korban Pesach belongs to the category of Korban Shelamim, which generally requires that the owner of the Korban give certain portions (known as חזה ושוק - the breast and right foreleg) to the Kohen. With the Pesach there is no such requirement, thereby de-emphasizing any essential difference in status between Kohanim and the rest of the Jewish people.)

"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

Each and every one of the Simanei Haseder have been placed as headers before each section. These are not to be understood as simple guides and previews of what is to come, rather, each and every one of these headlines have a specific relevance to this night. Even the common acts as Kiddush and washing our hands, among others, have their special place and relevance to the Leil Haseder. The primary purpose of this work is to highlight their specific bearings to this special night.

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'Shores 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) Chasam Sofer (Derashos vol. 2 pg. 258), in a lengthy discourse, establishes the importance of being patient. He elaborates as to how our entire Emunah and faith revolve around this important virtue and the historic pitfalls which resulted due to its absence. In conclusion, he suggests that the purpose of these headers is to train our children to be patient, to sit and wait until the proper time to eat arrives. Every section of this night has its time and place, and we need to exercise patience as we await its respective turn.
- 3) 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 to 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. The Malbim writes, in the second edition of his Haggada's introduction, (stylistically mirroring the Gemara (Kiddushin 49b) which uses the terminology “ten measures of wisdom came down to the world; the land of Israel received nine and one was the left for the rest of the world”, among other disproportionate distributions) that nine measures of Torah explanations came down to this world; the Haggadah received nine, and one remained for the rest of the Torah! 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.

It is well known that there are four facets of Torah; פשט, רמז, דרוש, פסוק, the acronym being פדרס. As a general rule, the extended meaning never contradicts the base meaning. Peshat is the plain or contextual meaning of the text. Remez is the allegorical meaning. Derash includes the metaphorical meaning, and Sod represents the hidden meaning. The word סדר seems to only incorporate סוד-דרוש and רמז. with the glaring omission of פשט – the simple meaning. Some Mefarshim suggest that just as Shir Hashirim is referred to as Kodesh Kadoshim, in the sense that it is just too holy for any simple or basic explanations. Its very essence transcends the realm of simplicity, and any association of elementary understanding would be minimizing the loftiness of the words. Kodesh Kadoshim, even in its most simple form (Rav Shraga Feivel Mendelowitz). Similarly, Seder night with all of the holiness surrounding it, has no simple level. It is called סדר to imply that this night is so rich with depth, only Sod, Derash and Remez are present and completely devoid of Peshat - simplicity.

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 and supernatural events are prearranged and have their precise place in the meticulous plan.

PRACTICAL HALACHOS

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.

מצרים

Mitzrayim

The land and nation of Mitzrayim is somewhat of an anomaly. It outlasts all the lands and nations of its time and has, somehow, found a way to survive. Even Sancherev, who was successful in mixing and confusing all of the nations, for some reason the nation of Mitzrayim returned back home after forty years (see Yechezkal 29:13, Tosafos Yevamos 76b s.v. *Minyamin* and Rambam Issurei Biah 12:25). The Alter of Kelm (quoted by Rav Chazkel Levenstien – Haggadah Yadav Emunah) suggests that the reason for this remarkable endurance, was to enable us, Klal Yisroel, to properly fulfill all the Mitzvos that are associated with Yetzias Mitzrayim. Imagine the difficulty of attempting to relay a story to our children, a story that is the foundation of our faith, that occurred in an unknown land to a nation that no longer exists! An impossible task. So Hashem orchestrated that the land of Mitzrayim will endure the hardships of survival, the nation will outlast its neighboring countries, all to help us fulfill our Mitzvos!

Chazal in numerous places (Beraishis Rabba 2:4, 16:4 etc.) list the four Kingdoms - Galuyos (exiles) that Klal Yisroel has endured. Bavel (Babylonia), Modai (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.

Furthermore, The Sefer Mitzvos Ha'katzar (one of the Ba'alei Tosfos) says something quite fascinating. Chazal (Shabbos 31a) tell us that one of the first questions a person will be asked in Shamayim, on the ultimate day of judgement, is whether he awaited the Ge'ulah: "Tzipisa L'yeshu'ah?" The Se"mak wonders where the source in the Torah is for such an obligation, a requirement that one must be Metzapeh L'yeshu'ah. He concludes that the source is none other than the first statement of the Aseres Ha'dibros: «אנכי ה' אלוקיך אשר הוצאתיך מארץ מצרים». This, of course, is the mitzvah of Emunah. But the Se"mak understands that it includes an obligation to believe that Hakadosh Baruch Hu is a Go'el, and just as He redeemed us from Mitzrayim, so too, He will be Go'el us from this Galus as well.

There are different opinions in Chazal that attempt to clarify the

premature (210 years instead of the intended 400 years) departure from Mitzrayim. One opinion is that the laborious intensity of the 210-year workload in fact equaled that of 400 years, while another opinion suggests that the remaining 190 years were actually distributed and scattered amongst future exiles (see Tzlach Pesachim 116b on Mishna of Raban Gamliel and footnote 4). Based on the latter opinion, the ultimate redemption will serve as the final stage completion of Yetzias Mitzrayim. We now can understand how and why the statement of «אנכי ה' אלוקיך אשר הוצאתיך מארץ מצרים» directly relates to final Ge'ulah and the need to anticipate its arrival. See below, *Shulchan Orech*, the Bais Halevi's explanation of the Minhag to eat eggs at the Seder and how it relates to this discussion.

הגדה

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 it 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. This story is so important to our faith that the Magen Avraham (471:7) rules that both boys and girls are included in this important Mitzvah of Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim. This opinion is echoed by the Aruch Hashulchan 472:15, who adds that on this night, given the magnitude and importance of the night's messages, girls must be included as well.

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.

- 1) 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 if 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. By wearing this somber garment, we declare that we will believe and convey this faith until our very last day on earth. And perhaps it is said with great urgency, as if it was our last day on earth, as we are focused on perpetuating this belief within our family. Because tonight, we are being judged on how well we have received our tradition and how well we are passing it on. The very same torch that has been passed on for nearly three thousand years is now in my hand, and I have been charged to hand it to my children. The flame of the torch may have flickered at some points along the way, but it burns brightly in my hand tonight.

- 2) The Maharal (Gevuros 51) writes that the wearing of the Kittel is meant to resemble the Kohen Gadol entering the Kodesh Hakadashim on Yom Kippur. This shocking comparison should serve as a window to the holiness and the levels one can reach on this special night.
- 3) The Netziv (introduction to Haggada Imrei Shefer) presents an idea to resolve this custom as well as many of the puzzling practices of the night. He suggests that every Seder was designed to replicate the original Seder, which was conducted during an era in which the Korban Pesach was brought. And just as one would approach the Mitzvah of eating the Korban Pesach from the "Table of Hashem" with fear and seriousness, so too us, even Jews in exile, duplicate that very mindset and behavior.
- 4) The Gemara (Kedushin 40a) states that if a person sees that his Yetzer Harah is overcoming him, he should go to a place where he is not known. He should wear **black clothes**, cover himself in simple **black garments** and do as his heart desires, but he should not desecrate the name of Hashem in public. Rashi explains

that black clothing is demeaning and unbecoming of honorable people. We are hopeful that this compromised feeling may help him overcome the Yetzer Harah. It would appear, then, that white clothing is in fact a symbol of honor and glory and is the color of choice on this night, which is dedicated to exhibit freedom and royalty.

PRACTICAL HALACHOS

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 (Rambam Hil. Chametz U'Matzah 8:3-4). The Tur (473:7) however, is of the opinion that the Ke'arah with the Matzah should be present on the table during the entire recitation of the Haggadah. The Netziv (Haamek Davar Re'ah 16:3) suggests that this practice is due to the Matzah being referred to as “Lechem Ani”, bread which “many words are spoken about” (see Pesachim 36) which refers to Haggadah. (See Netziv there for a fascinating explanation as to why this is the singular time in the Torah, that Matzah is referred to as Lechem Oni.)

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 alongside a Mitzvah on this night, as one is used while saying Kiddush, one to accompany the 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 וגאלתי ולקחתי. (Beraishis Rabba 88). However, upon closer examination, there seems to be a glaring omission. There is a fifth word used in the sequence of those Pesukim (Vaeira 6: 6-8) – והבאתי, and I will bring you into the land, that seems to have been deliberately omitted. In fact, there are Rishonim (Maharil quoting the Rosh, Raavad on the Baal Hamaor Pesachim 118) that are of the opinion that the fifth cup, The Kos Shel Eliyahu, does in fact correspond to והבאתי, the fifth word used to describe of the Geulah. Nevertheless, the question still begs - why does והבאתי not have its place amongst the other words that earned their individual cups? Perhaps it can be understood based on the Meshech Chochma's (Vaera 6:9) fascinating observation. He alerts us to the fact that this promise of והבאתי, bringing them into Eretz Yisroel, was mentioned once but never again. He understands the words of (Vaeira ibid.) "They would not listen to Moshe because of their crushed spirits and cruel bondage" in reference to the promise of bringing Klal Yisroel into Eretz Yisroel. They paid no attention to the words of this promise, as their principal concern was to be relieved of their condition of hardship. As such, this promise was never mentioned again. Therefore, on the night we are expected to recount the story of Mitzrayim, the Chachamim elected to leave this word out. (See also Likutei Hapardes – Rashi – pg. 34) 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). This explanation is somewhat enlightening, as it creates a reference to Yosef, the first of the Shevatim who descended to Mitzrayim who otherwise seems to have been omitted; see *Karpas* below.

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. The source of this idea can be found in the Medrash Rabbah (Beshalach 20:18): And Hashem led the people around...from here our Chachamim said that even the poorest in Klal Yisroel should not eat until he reclines (Yasev), because this is what the Hashem did for them 'And Hashem led the people around (Vayasev).' Mefarshim wonder why this source isn't brought in the Rishonim as the reason for leaning, as they seem to provide the generic reason of "Derech Cheirus", it is a conduct of freedom (see Rashi and Rashbam Pesachim 99b). Perhaps it can be suggested that there are, in fact, two elements of leaning. One element is remembering the freedom of Mitzrayim - Zecher L'Chairus - and attempting to relive that sensational experience. Then, there is an element of Derech Chairus, exhibiting and acting in the way of free men. This idea can be found with a closer examination of the precise wording of the Rambam (ibid). The Rambam writes: 'They have obligated us to eat while reclining in order to eat like kings and dignitaries, until it is act of freedom'. It would appear that the Rambam is combining the two aforementioned reasons. One can now understand why we,

today, in an era that reclining is no longer considered a luxurious act, (Maharil refers to reclining as the method of eating of the sick, see Ravva) are still required to eat in this manner. It is viewed as part of the obligation to remember the freedom experienced while leaving Mitzrayim, and not solely for the sake of acting in the way of free men.

Although both the Matzah and the act of leaning are demonstrative of freedom, there is a fundamental difference between them. Matzah is inherently reminiscent of the freedom of Mitzrayim, while Heseibah is only associated with the freedom of Mitzrayim WHEN we simultaneously act and discuss that freedom (See Pesachim 108a).

PRACTICAL HALACHOS

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 Heseibah 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)

Most people assume that the Beracha of Borei Pri Hagafen that we recite at Kiddush is the same “simple” Beracha which we would make even on non-Kiddush wine. Rav Shlomo Zalmen Auerbach (Minchas Shlomo vol.1 18:7), in novel form, suggests otherwise. He suggests, that the Beracha recited prior to enjoying the physical enjoyment of the wine includes the “enjoyment” of the Mitzva of Kiddush as well. We are to thank Hashem for providing us with wine, and the ability to perform a Mitzvah with it. Therefore, even someone who despises wine and feels “forced” to drink it for the sake of the Mitzvah, would still be required to recite the proper Beracha prior to consumption. (See Ritva Rosh Hashana 29a s.v. Buai – V'taidah, Maharam Shik OC”H 319.) (See below, *Borech*, for a similar idea by Rav Moshe Feinstein regarding the Birkas Hamazon after the Matzah.)

There is a longstanding obligation to mention Yetzias Mitzrayim during the recital of Kiddush on Shabbos (Pesachim 117b). Failure to do so disqualifies the Mitzvah (see Biur Halacha 171:1). The Rashbam (Pesachim ibid. s.v. Tzarich) suggests that the source of the Kiddush obligation on Shabbos (Gezeira Shava) and Yom Tovim (Ma Matzinu) is from Kiddush on Pesach. It is apparent from his wording that the original source of Kiddush is on the night of Pesach, and Shabbos and Yom Tov are merely extensions of that obligation. See B”hag (Hil. Kiddush and Havdala pg. 91) who sources the Kiddush obligation of each individual Yom Tov from its own Pasuk, implying that the obligation of Kiddush is unique to each individual Yom Tov. See also Maor H’afeila (Rabeinu Nesanel Ben Yeshaya – one of the Rishonim from Teiman 1392) who writes: It is a positive commandment of the Torah to relate the miracles and wonders that were performed for our ancestors in Mitzrayim on the night of the fifteenth of Nisan, and this is the Kiddush of the evening of Pesach as it is stated: Remember the Shabbos day. It appears that the Kiddush on the Seder night is unique and different than all others, as it is also a fulfillment of the Mitzvah of Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim, the primary mitzvah of the night. For a further discussion on this topic, see below, Maggid - Why don’t we say a Beracha on The Haggadah.

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. This custom is based upon Mishlei (23:31), 'do not ogle that red wine as it lends its color to the cup, as it flows on smoothly', which implies that the red coloring of the wine contributes to its appeal and draw. Additionally, it is reminiscent of the blood of Bris Milah and the Korban Pesach, the two Mitzvos Klal Yisroel performed in Mitzrayim with great sacrifice (Ohr Zaruah Pesach 256); the blood spilled by Pharaoh to bathe in when he was plagued by leprosy (Taz 473:9); Makkas Dam (Pri Megadim A"R 472:13

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.

ורחצ

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).

PRACTICAL HALACHOS

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. (Pashut-based on Gemara Berachos (42a) see also Halichos Shlomo (9 footnote 183) and Kovetz Halachos (23:3)-Rav Shmuel Kaminitzky)

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 - פ-ר-ך -ס', 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. The connection between Karpas and Pasim is found in the Gemara as well. The Pasuk (Esther 1:6) says there were hangings of Chur, Karpas, and Techailles. The Gemara Megillah (12a) asks: What is Chur? Rav said: A fabric fashioned with many holes [Charei Charei], similar to lace. And Shmuel said: He spread out for them carpets of white wool, as the word Chavar means white. And what is Karpas? Rav Yosei Bar Chanina said: Cushions [Karim] of velvet [Pasim]. 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.

PRACTICAL HALACHOS

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 to eat less than a Kizayis – no larger than half an egg.

Custom is not to eat Karpas with Hesaibah.

יח"י

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 set aside to be eaten later as the Afikoman.

The Chasam Sofer, in a fascinating Derasha (Pesach pg. 536 s.v. Ma), offers an eye-opening explanation of this seemingly strange practice. There is an ever-present obligation of visualizing oneself as if he left Mitzrayim, tonight. We are expected to paint a vivid picture of the bitter slavery and attempt to experience the sweetness of freedom. He suggests, based on the idea that the slavery affected us on both a spiritual and physical level, that this obligation applies to the spiritual aspect of the slavery as well. **‘Originally our ancestors were idol worshippers’**. We are charged with trying to visualize the empty life of an idol worshipper, and the transformation into the elevated and meaningful lives of Avdei Hashem. To highlight this point, we raise a Matzah in our hands and act as if we are ready to eat it – **without reciting a Beracha**. We proceed to break the bread - as we attempt to portray the lives of non-Jews who devour food without any thoughts of gratitude – to exhibit our sorry spiritual state in Mitzrayim.

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.

This practice is somewhat puzzling. If the purpose of having a broken, small piece of Matzah on the table is to fulfill the “Lechem Ani” requirement, why do we deliberately break a whole Matzah to accomplish this? Why would we not begin the night with broken Matzah already on the table? What is the significance of purposely breaking the Matzah in half? Perhaps we can suggest, based on a novel explanation of the Kol Bo (on Ha Lachma Anya), who writes: “Ha Lachma Anya” is an announcement to the young children, explaining why we divide the matzah in two, the manner of a poor man.

It is because our forefathers in Mitzrayim ate poor man's bread due to the necessary haste. Hence, they said to one another, "Whoever is in need should come and partake." In other words, whoever did not prepare should come to me; for, I have it (bread) ready. The "poor man bread" signifies the fact that Klal Yisroel took their own breads and cracked them in half to distribute to their needy brothers, and it is these remarkable acts of kindness that we wish to memorialize.

Alternatively, the Chasam Sofer, in a fascinating Derasha (Pesach pg. 536 s.v. Ma), offers an eye-opening explanation of this seemingly strange practice. There is an ever-present obligation of visualizing oneself as if he left Mitzrayim, tonight. We are expected to paint a vivid picture of the bitter slavery and attempt to experience the sweetness of freedom. He suggests, based on the idea that the slavery affected us on both a spiritual and physical level, that this obligation applies to the spiritual aspect of the slavery as well. 'Originally our ancestors were idol worshippers'. We are charged with trying to visualize the empty life of an idol worshipper, and the transformation into the elevated and meaningful lives of Avdei Hashem. To highlight this point, we raise a Matzah in our hands and act as if we are ready to eat it – without reciting a Beracha. We proceed to break the bread - as we attempt to portray the lives of non-Jews who devour food without any thoughts of gratitude – to exhibit our sorry spiritual state in Mitzrayim.

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.*

PRACTICAL HALACHOS

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. However, on this night, words alone are not sufficient. The Mishna (Pesachim 10:5) states: In each and every generation, a person must view himself

as though he personally left Mitzrayim. The Rambam (Chometz U'Matzah 7:6) adds: In each and every generation, a person must present himself as if he, himself, has now left the slavery of Mitzrayim. This obligation is daunting, and, quite frankly, impossible to fulfill. How can we, who have never experienced the brutality of slavery, be expected to feel the sweetness of liberation and freedom? The Maharal (Gevuros Hashem 54) explains that we are obligated to feel and believe that even if we, members of our lowly generation, had been in Mitzrayim, Hashem still would have performed all those amazing miracles and taken us out. Furthermore, we are charged to believe that even if there was only one person in Mitzrayim that was worthy of being freed, He still would have performed all those amazing miracles! And even if that lone individual was me, Hashem, in His abundance of love for each and every Jew, would have still completely upended the natural course of the world and performed every single one of those miracles – JUST FOR ME! (See Meshech Chochma (Vaeira 6:7-8) for a similar idea regarding the astounding statement of Rav Simai in Sanhedrin 111:A)

Alternatively, Rav Yaakov M'Lisa (Maaseh Nissim s.v. Bchol Dor V'Dor) explains that we are not expected to feel as if we experienced the ACTUAL, PHYSICAL LIBERATION, but, rather, we are expected to rejoice in the OUTCOME and PURPOSE of the redemption. We, from that moment to this very day, have been the chosen people and the children of Hashem. We have defied all odds and, despite the countless exiles and persecutions, are still flourishing and thriving. We have been loved, guarded and protected since that fateful day, and that has allowed the flame of Klal Yisroel to burn for eternity.

Being that Maggid is the primary Mitzvah of the night and a fulfillment of a biblical commandment, why is there no Beracha required prior to the reading of the Haggadah?

1. The minimal requirement has already been fulfilled during the recital of Kiddush when the words “Zecher L'yetzias Mitzrayim” were said (Riaf quoted by Avudraham and Pri Chadash 473).
2. There is no set and specific text that is required and any discussion regarding Yetzias Mitzrayim will be a fulfillment of this Mitzvah (Rashba).
3. The primary obligation is to perform the acts that will evoke a remembrance of Yetzias Mitzrayim, and only if and when we are asked as to why we are performing these Mitzvos do we need to respond by relating the story of Mitzrayim (Rosh Teshuvos 24:2).

4. We don't recite a Beracha on a Mitzvah that the Mitzvah itself is a Beracha i.e. Birchas Hamazon and Birchas Hatorah. The essence of Mitzvas Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim is Berachos to Hashem, as is summarized at the conclusion of Maggid with the Beracha of Asher G'alanu. Therefore, no Beracha is required on this Mitzvah, which is inherently a Beracha to Hashem.

It is referred to as Maggid/Haggadah in contrast to Amirah or Dibur, and 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; הגדת עדות, testimony of a witness, must be inherently true. 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. Gittleston pg. 48 for an extensive discussion of this topic). [ועיי"ש ביאור נפלא בפסוקים פרשת לך לך יב' יח' יט' מה. זאת עשיית 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.

SNAPSHOT OF MAGGID

The Tiferes Yisrael (Avos 2:14 and introduction to Seder Kodshim) provides us with timeless advice on how to approach a subject or matter which we wish to truly understand. He suggests that one ask themselves the following seven simple questions: **WHO, WHAT, TO WHO, WHEN, WHERE, HOW AND TO WHOM**. If we are to attempt to break down the Haggadah into different sections, this would be a good formula to follow.

הא לחמא עניא – INTRODUCTION TO MAGGID. This stanza

has no source in Chazal and is assumed to be a later addition (see Chasam Sofer on Chad Gadya, quoted in the introduction to this work). Rav Yechiel Yaakov Weinberg (Haggadas Seridei Aish) related that as young boy growing up, he observed the townsfolk laboriously set aside the few coins they earned to save for their Shabbos meals. Yet it was these impoverished Jews, not the wealthy ones, that would invite those in need of a meal to their homes and feed them from their hard-earned sustenance. The meager leftovers – perhaps a Kizayis - would then be consumed by the gracious host, and somehow left them completely full and satisfied. Their satisfaction was of a spiritual nature – filling themselves with the inner happiness of knowing that SOMEONE ELSE was full and satisfied! This is the meaning of these opening words. Although we sit down to eat “Lachma Anya”, the poor man’s bread, we nevertheless extend an invitation to the needy and are prepared to satiate ourselves with the happiness and satisfaction of others. See there for a beautiful explanation of the Gemara (Berachos 20b) “And how can I not show favor to Yisrael etc.” based on this novel idea.

מה נשתנה – The QUESTIONS. The purpose of these questions is to understand the reasoning for THE TORAH MITZVOS of the night, such as the eating of Matzah and Marror. Additionally, we encourage our children to question the strange behavior that the child has ALREADY SEEN, i.e. dipping and leaning. The drinking of the four cups have yet to be observed and are therefore omitted (Maaseh Nissim). Additionally, the questions highlight the conflicting messages of the night. On the one hand, we exhibit signs of freedom and royalty, while on the other hand we reminisce the hardships and the bitter slavery. What is the theme of the night? Freedom or slavery?

Contrary to popular belief, the Vilna Gaon suggests that there in fact FIVE questions in this segment. He opines that the opening line of “Ma Nishtana Haleilah Hazeh Mikol Haleilos” is in and of itself a question. The majority of our Mitzvos need to be performed during the daytime, and we NEVER find a Mitzvah that can ONLY be performed at night. Hence the question, why is this night exclusively embellished with positive Mitzvos whereas all other nights of the year are empty of Mitzvah obligations?

Alternatively, and in line with conventional wisdom that there are in fact only four questions in this segment, the Aruch Hashulchan (473:21) understands the words “Ma Nishtana” as a statement of astonishment. He bases this novel idea on other Pesukim that use this word as an expression of wonder, such as Ma Gadlu Masecha Hashem, how great are Your works Hashem (Tehilim 92:6), and Ma Tov Ohalecha Yaakov, how goodly are your tents Yaakov. So

too, on this night, we stand amazed and marvel at the blatant changes and modifications of the Seder; Ma Nishtana!

עבדים היינו – THE SHORT ANSWER. The theme of the night is GRATITUDE. We express our appreciation to Hashem for taking us out of Mitzrayim (Rambam, Avudraham). Alternatively, the purpose of relaying the story of Mitzrayim is to reinforce our EMUNAH – FAITH. The might, power and total mastery of every creation showcased in Mitzrayim should strengthen our belief that Hashem Alone controls every event of our lives (Sefer Hachinuch, Rablag). Alternatively, by recounting the story of our slavery, we are expected to study, examine and internalize the concept of SERVITUDE, and apply that very attitude and approach to our new Master – Hashem. Our status of a servant hasn't changed, we have simply shifted our allegiances from the Egyptians to Hashem (based on Ramban, Sforno in Shemos [20:2]). See Me'Ayin Bais Hashoaiva (Bo 12:39), who suggests that this idea is symbolized by the fact that Klal Yisroel discovered that their dough had not risen, and they would once again be forced to eat the bread of slavery – Matzos – even after their exodus.

אפילו כולנו חכמים – WHO IS OBLIGATED. Despite the Mitzvah being to relay a story that is recorded in the Torah, everyone is obligated to perform this important Mitzvah. And even the scholars, who are already proficient and familiar with all the details of the story, still need to spend this night focusing on it. Because, they too, are required to express their GRATITUDE, solidify their EMUNAH – FAITH and reinforce their commitment of SERVITUDE. Alternatively, being that the primary Mitzva is to relate the story to the future generations, their prestige and acquired knowledge does not absolve them of this responsibility (Malbim).

מעשה ברבי אליעזר – HOW AND WHEN. The ideal way to perform this Mitzvah is by elaborating and expounding on all its details. The Haggadah states: THE MORE ONE TELLS ABOUT THE DISCUSSION OF THE EXODUS, THE MORE HE IS PRAISEWORTHY. And although it is forbidden to add elements to the Mitzvos of the Torah (Baal Tosif), this Mitzvah is unique and is exempt from that prohibition (Rav Avraham Ben Ha'Gra, see also Netziv – Imrei Shefer). Additionally, even those that are of the opinion that Matzah can only be eaten until Chatzos – midnight (such as Reb Elazar Ben Azaria who was a participant of this gathering), agree that the praise associated with the elaboration of the story continues even past Chatzos (Meshech Chochma). Furthermore, it would seem from the message of the students that were it not for the fleeting Mitzvah of Krias Shema, the fulfillment of the Mitzvah of relating the story of the exodus would have continued even into the morning (Netziv – Imrei Shefer).

אמר רבי אלעזר בן עזריה – THE DAILY MITZVAH TO REMEMBER.

In addition to the Mitzvah of discussing the exodus on the night of Pesach, there is also an everyday Mitzvah to mention Yetzias Mitzrayim daily and nightly. However, there are THREE FUNDAMENTAL DIFFERENCES between these two similar Mitzvos. The night of Pesach is unique in the sense that it requires the story to be told in 1) question answer form; 2) beginning with the with disgrace (our forefathers were idol worshippers; we were slaves) and concluding with glory; 3) one needs to explain and understand THE REASONING behind the Mitzvos of the night (Rav Chaim Soloveitchik).

כנגד ארבעה בנים – TO WHOM. Up until this point, the Haggadah was focused on discussing the exodus from a logical perspective. Now, the Haggadah turns its attention to Pesukim of the Torah, and highlights that this Mitzvah is in fact a TORAH OBLIGATION (Malbim). The Torah specifically instructs us to relay the story of Mitzrayim TO OUR CHILDREN, “*V’Higadita L’Bincha*”. This Mitzvah is so important, and of such great significance, that the Torah designates different approaches for the various children based on their interest and intellectual capabilities (Ritva). This stanza is prefaced by ברוך המקום, a blessing for the gift of the Torah, because it is unique and unlike all other subjects. Torah is divine and can be understood and absorbed on a multitude of levels – the four sons - with each one legitimately accomplishing the Mitzvah to its fullest (Rav Chaim Soloveitchik).

יכול מראש חודש – WHEN. The Haggadah entertains a serious suggestion to begin discussing the exodus from Rosh Chodesh – two weeks before Pesach. Perhaps this puzzling suggestion can be explained with the understanding that in addition to the PHYSICAL SALVATION that occurred on this night, there was a SPIRITUAL SALVATION as well. The first segment of the spiritual salvation began when they were given the very first Mitzvah of Rosh Chodesh, Hachodesh Hazeh Lachem, and Chazal seriously entertain the possibility that discussions of the Geulah need to commence on that monumental day. THE MORE ONE TELLS ABOUT THE DISCUSSION OF THE EXODUS, THE MORE HE IS PRAISEWORTHY. The greater the celebration of the spiritual riches acquired by the salvation, the greater the indication of his exalted character – HE – HIS ESSENCE – IS PRAISEWORTHY (Rav Yitzchak Elchanan Specter).

מתחילה עובדי עבודה זרה – WHAT. This lengthy section is where the primary Mitzvah begins, as the Gemara (Pesachim 116a) states, Maschil B’gnus U’misayem B’shvach, that one must begin with the disgraceful times and conclude with praise and glory. The Rambam (Hil. Avoda Zara 1:3) writes that the extended stay in Mitzrayim nearly led to an uprooting of the faith which Avraham had planted, and Klal Yisroel turning to the error of idol worship. The

spiritual level that the Yidden had sunk to in Mitzrayim was of pre-Avraham era proportion, and to bring our attention to this spiritual low, we mention Terach at this point of the Haggadah (and not before Avadim Hayinu).

אָרַמִּי אָבֵד אָבִי – THE COMPLETE STORY. The extensive analyzation of the story of Yetzias Mitzrayim, using the Pesukim associated with the Mitzvah of Bikurim, is beyond puzzling. It would seem more appropriate to use the Pesukim that focus primarily on Yetzias Mitzrayim. Furthermore, the Rambam (Chametz U'Matzah 7:4) writes that in addition to the general praise given to one who elaborates the discussion of this Mitzvah (ibid 7:1), it is also praiseworthy for one “who adds and speaks at length in expounding this section (*Arami Oved Avi*)”. The significance of these specific Pesukim can be understood in the following manners. 1) The Parsha of Bikkurim is the only sequence of Pesukim that encompasses the story in its entirety, from the earliest stages and culminating **WITH THE ARRIVAL IN ERETZ YISROEL**. The most appropriate form of Hodaah, thanks, is one that is comprehensive and all-inclusive. 2) Rav Shlomo Kluger suggests that this specific Parsha was chosen, given that it is written in first person tense, “*did evil to us, afflicted us and imposed hard labor upon us etc.*”, and thereby allowing the reader to feel as if they personally experienced the exodus.

THE TEN MAAKOS. The Rambam (Chametz U'Matzah 7:1) writes: It is a positive commandment of the Torah to relate the miracles and wonders wrought for our ancestors in Egypt on the night of the fifteenth of Nisan etc., whoever elaborates concerning the events which occurred and took place is worthy of praise. It is noteworthy that the Rambam does not simply write that we are obligated to discuss and relate the fact that we left Mitzrayim but, rather, he chooses to focus on the “miracles and wonders” that occurred to our ancestors in Mitzrayim (Mori V'Rabi Rav Moishe Shapiro). This would imply that there is to be a special focus on discussing the ten Maakos, as they were the most prominent of the miracles and wonders.

In fact, the Mishna Berura (473:64) quotes Chayei Adam that it was customary to call the Jewish workers (servers) to the table for the discussions of the ten Maakos that Hashem brought upon the Mitzriyim, to relate for them some of the miracles that Hashem performed on behalf of Klal Yisroel.

THE TEN MIRACLES. The Mishna (Avos 5:5) states: Ten miracles were performed for our ancestors in Egypt, and ten at the sea. Ten plagues did the Holy One, Blessed is He, bring upon the Egyptians in Egypt and ten at the sea. The miracles that were performed for our ancestors in Mitzrayim was the fact that were saved and spared from the ten Maakos that struck the entire land.

The Torah states about each and every Maaka (except lice - see Rabeinu Yonah Avos ibid.), that Hashem differentiated between the Yidden and the Mitzriyim. Since Divine retribution typically operates on the principle that “once the forces of destruction are unleashed, they do not differentiate between good people (who deserve to be saved) and bad people (who deserved to be punished), it was only due to the miraculous intervention of Hashem that the Yidden were spared from the suffering of the Maakos.

The order of the aforementioned Mishna seems ironic, as it mentions the miracles performed for the Yidden before the punishment of the Mitzriyim. The Chasid Yaavetz (Avos ibid.) suggests that it is because the primary purpose of the ten Maakos was not the punishment of the Mitzriyim, but rather the clear expression of Klal Yisroel’s chosenness, as demonstrated by the fact that they remained unscathed by the rampant and brutal Maakos.

TIMELINE OF THE TEN MAAKOS. The Mishna (Eduyos 2:10) teaches that the judgement of the Mitzriyim (the ten Maakos) was over twelve months. Furthermore, Rashi (Vaeira 7:25) states that each of the ten Maakos lasted for one month. This would seem to imply that the ten Maakos occurred within a span of ten months, not twelve! Mefarshim suggest that either there was an interruption in the Maakos which totaled two months (Maharsha Rosh Hashana 11B), or that one-month duration of each Maaka is not precise, and in fact each Maaka lasted a little longer than one month (Gra to Seder Olam 3, Tiferes Yisroel 73). Alternatively, the Midrash (Tehilim 78) states: For seven days, the plague was in their midst, and for twenty-three days, the plague was absent. And seven days elapsed between one plague and the next, as it says (Vaeira 7:25) seven days were fulfilled after Hashem struck the Nile.

PURPOSE OF THE TEN MAAKOS. The primary purpose of the Maakos could not have simply been as a form of punishment and retribution for the Mitzriyim. Had that been the case, one enormous Maaka, such as Maakas Bechoros, would have been sufficient. Furthermore, if the sole purpose of the Maakos was to liberate Klal Yisroel from Mitzrayim, He could have simply paralyzed the Mitzriyim and instruct them to walk out freely. Why, then, did Hashem feel the need to bring ten Maakos?

The Maharal suggests that they were deliberately and carefully chosen to demonstrate to all the nations of the world the omnipotence of Hashem. These ten Maakos served as a public display of complete and total control of EVERY SINGLE element of the universe. He used these as ten vehicles to carry the ultimate message of (Vaeira 9:14): “In order that you know that there is none

like Me in the entire earth”.

The Malbim (Hagadah on section Ubimorah Gadol) suggests that the primary purpose was to instill Emunah into the hearts and minds of Klal Yisroel. They had been exposed to the idol worshiping Egyptians for hundreds of years, and those false beliefs had negatively impacted them. This slow, prolonged and process was necessary, to allow them to absorb and internalize these timeless and fundamental lessons. Hashem was revealing His true might and power slowly and deliberately, and these important messages were being received.

Furthermore, Malbim (Vaeira 7:14) explains that the ten Maakos are grouped into three groups of three, and each group was designed to focus and teach a specific lesson of Emunah. They were meant to teach the entire world three fundamental truths: A) That G-d exists, B) that He oversees world affairs, and C) that His power is supreme and incomparable to any other power. Indeed, the precise wording of the Pesukim are testament to this idea. The first group taught (7:17): “Through this you will know that I am G-d”; the second group taught (8:18): “[This is] in order that you should know that I am G-d in the midst of the land”; and the third group taught (9:14): “In order that you know that there is none like Me in the entire earth”. He bases this on the Pesach Haggadah which, after enumerating the ten Maakos informs, “Rabbi Yehudah made of them Simanim: D’tzach, Adash, B’achav.” From here we see that Chazal themselves divided the Maakos into three groups, thus implying that each came to teach one of the true, cardinal principles of Emuna.

MIDAH K’NEGED MIDAH. Chazal (Tana Dvei Eliyah 7, Mishnas Rabbi Eliezer 19, among many other places) have gone to great lengths to find correlations between the behavior of the Mitzriyim and the punishments they received by virtue of the Maakos. Furthermore, Chazal add that they even received corresponding punishments for what they had plotted to do to the Yidden, despite the fact that those plans never materialized. Hashem, whose essence and embodiment is Emes, taught the Mitzriyim how justice prevails and how the punishment precisely fits the crime. Indeed, the Droshos HaRan (3) emphasizes, even for us – to this very day, that Divine Providence is evident when the punishment comes in the exact area where the sin was committed.

כמה מעלות טובות – FULL RECOGNITION OF HASHEM’S

KINDNESS. Following the extensive elaboration of the Parsha of Bikkurim, where the grateful farmer expresses his gratitude to Hashem for the fruits of the land, we digress and focus on the string of events that led to this milestone. When one wishes to properly thank a gift giver, it is imperative that they try and identify all the efforts, thoughts and work that were invested until the gift actually reached their hands (Rashbatz).

רבן גמליאל - פסח, מצה ומרור – SUMMARY OF MAGGID. The words of Raban Gamliel are perhaps the most important section of the Haggadah, as they encompass THE REASONING OF THE MITZVOS we perform, and are structured in a QUESTION AND ANSWER (*Al Shum Ma?*) format (Toldos Adam). Although we rarely look for the reasoning of Mitzvos, as it is ideal to serve Hashem without questioning His Will, on this night we focus on the reasoning as it highlights the purpose of THE REDEMPTION, and not the Mitzvah itself (Tzelach Pesachim 116b). We were liberated and freed from servitude for a purpose: To apply those very work ethics and dedication to a Higher Master.

הלל – THE SONG OF SURVIVORS. On the night of the Seder, we unconventionally split up Hallel as we look to incorporate the first two Perakim into our Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim. We preface our Hallel with the words “*V’Nomar L’Fanav Shira Chadasha*, let us recite a new song before Him”, as this “new” song is that of someone who feels as if they have just PERSONALLY EXPERIENCED THE MIRACLES (Emek Beracha). The first two Perakim of Hallel are recited, as the second Perek is exclusive to the miracles of Mitzrayim and are therefore appropriately inserted into the narrative of the night (Levush 473). Additionally, Chazal (Yerushalmi Pesachim 5:5) relate that on the eve of the redemption, Pharaoh was screaming and, miraculously, power was given to his voice so it was heard throughout the entire country. And what was he saying? “Rise up, go out from among my people. IN THE PAST YOU WERE SERVANTS OF PHARAOH AND FROM NOW ON YOU ARE SERVANTS OF HASHEM.” At that time, the Jews recited Hallel beginning “*HALLELUYAH*, GIVE PRAISE, YOU SERVANTS OF HASHEM, for they were NO LONGER THE SERVANTS OF PHARAOH”. The relevance of the first Perek of Hallel on the night of the Seder is now self-understood.

ברכת אשר גאלנו - THE BERACHA. The segment of Maggid is brought to a close with a Beracha. The Beracha is meant to thank Hashem for the wondrous miracles He performed, and is reminiscent of the Beracha of “*Sheaasa Nissim L’Avoseinu*” recited on Chanukah and Purim – with but one fundamental difference. That Beracha focuses only on the miracles performed for THEM – *L’Avoseinu*, while the terminology of our Beracha, “*Asher G’Alanu*”,

indicates that we too benefitted from the miracles. The night is designed to assist us in developing a feeling of personal freedom, and this Beracha is consistent with that theme (Rav S.Z. Auerbach). Alternatively, it is a Beracha on THE MITZVAH of Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim and, unlike other Mitzvos, it is recited AFTER concluding the Mitzvah. This puzzling change can be compared to the Beracha that a Ger makes upon the conclusion of their conversion process, as they had been unworthy of uttering a Beracha until that point. This night was designed to act and feel as though we were living in Mitzrayim, which would mean that over the course of the Seder it is as if we too were idol worshippers, thereby rendering us unworthy of making a Beracha until we recount the complete spiritual redemption (Chasam Sofer).

PRACTICAL HALACHOS

Matzahs are uncovered when we say “*Ha Lachma Anya*” until Ma Nishtana. The cup should be filled before reciting the Haggadah.

This story is so important to our faith that Magen Avraham (471:7) rules that both boys and girls are included in this important Mitzvah of Sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim. This opinion is echoed by the Aruch Hashulchan 472:15 who adds, that on this night, given the magnitude and importance of the night’s messages, girls must be included as well.

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.

רחצה

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.*”.

— PRACTICAL HALACHOS —

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 Mitzvos 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. Perhaps, the Chasam Sofer means that it is the last of the biblically commanded Mitzvos to eat a specific food item.)

See above – *Kadesh* – the novel idea of Rav Shlomo Zalmen Auerbach regarding Kiddush, which he applies to the Beracha of Hamotzi on the Matzah as well. In brief, the Beracha recited prior to enjoying the physical enjoyment of the Matzah includes the “enjoyment” of the Mitzvah of Matzah as well. We are to thank Hashem for providing us with Matzah, and the ability to perform a Mitzvah with it. (See below, *Borech*, for a similar idea by Rav Moshe Feinstein regarding the Birchas Hamazon **after** the Matzah.)

See Avnei Nezer (OC”H 535:19) for a fascinating idea regarding the Mitzvah of eating Matzah. It is typically understood that the Mitzvah begins with the actual act of eating. However, the Avnei Nezer suggests, based on his understanding of the Mitzvos of eating Terumah and Korbanos, that the Mitzvah actually begins from the moment one holds the Matzah and begins the motion of bringing it towards his mouth for consumption.

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 symbol of hardship is now the icon of freedom.

Furthermore, Matzah was the bread that was eaten by the Yidden in Mitzrayim, because they were being constantly rushed to return to work and simply did not have the time to allow their doughs to rise. As the liberation began to unfold, they were no longer pressed for time and were looking forward to enjoying their real bread – the bread of freedom. However, Hashem had other plans. He wanted to impart to them that their servitude would continue, and, from that day on, they will be serving Hashem in place of serving Pharaoh. It was for this reason that Hashem miraculously orchestrated that their doughs should not rise, despite having ample time to do so. On this night, we eat Matzah to memorialize this miracle of the dough NOT rising, and celebrate the transition from being servants of Pharaoh to becoming servants of Hashem (Meayin Bais Hashoeva Bo 12:39).

One should distribute the Kizayis of Matzah to all participants BEFORE WASHING. This will avoid the unnecessary Hefsek (break) between both washing, the Berachos and eating. It will also ensure that the Beracha of Hamotzi will be said on broken Matzah – Lechem Oni (Halichos Shlomo 9:note 265).

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, this is ONLY relevant to the one making the Beracha and one Kizayis is sufficient for all other participants. Rav Moishe Feinstein (Haggadah Kol Dodi 14:3), Halichos Shlomo (9:40).

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, (Based on Bais HaLevi Shemos 3:7) 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.

PRACTICAL HALACHOS

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)

כורך

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 Korban Pesach and the biblical Mitzvos 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.

The Meshech Chochma (Bo 13:8), enlightens us with a similar idea. He explains the words of the Haggadah, ‘that the obligation of “You shall tell your son” applies only at the time when Matzah and Maror lie before you.’ Mefarshim are bothered by the omission of the Korban Pesach. Rav Meir Simcha suggests that the primary purpose of Hashem taking us out of Mitzrayim, to serve Him instead of Pharaoh, is actually fulfilled when we find ourselves in Galus. When we serve Him despite the beatings, when we follow His Will despite the persecutions, that is the ultimate demonstration of our commitment. It is in

fact, when ONLY the Matzah and Maror lie before us, WITHOUT the Korban Pesach, is when Hashem says, Baavur Zeh, it is because of this commitment that I took you out of Mitzrayim.

PRACTICAL HALACHOS

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 Kaminitzky 30:2). (See Avnei Nezer [OC”H 383:6] for an elaboration of this topic)

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 עורך

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”h 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 as a memory for mourning, Aveilus (R”ema 476:2). The Rema suggests a reasoning for this puzzling custom, based on the fact that each and every year, the eve of Tisha Ba’av will fall out on the same day of the week as the eve of Pesach. The Bais Halevi (Derasha 4) connects the two nights, based on Chazal that the early departure (210 years instead of 400 years) from Mitzrayim, was in fact the cause for some of the other exiles, as the four-hundred-year quota needed to be met. Accordingly, the redemption from Mitzrayim cannot be considered a complete redemption, as the darkness of the other exiles now loomed. The final and complete redemption will only take place with the arrival of Mashiach. It is the mourning of the Bais Hamikdash that we memorialize on this night as we anticipate the final Geulah and the finalization of Yetzias Mitzrayim. See above, *Mitzrayim*, the explanation of the Se”mak’s opinion of “Tzipisa L’yeshu’ah?” and how it relates to this discussion.

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).

PRACTICAL HALACHOS

Many people dip the egg in saltwater.

Although it is praiseworthy to eat the entire meal with Hesaibah, the prevalent 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 of 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.

One should not say that they are full and can't eat anymore, or even feel that eating the Afikoman is burdensome. (Rokeach quoted by Bais Yosef 477 and Magen Avraham 476:2)

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 1/2 of a machine Matzah.

Afikoman is eaten with Hesaibah. If one forgot, if remembered before Bentching (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).

On the second night of Pesach, one may drink any type of non-alcoholic drink after Afikoman. (Pri Megadim and Mishna Berura 481:1, Chayei Adam (130:19-15)).

772

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.

Rav Moshe Feinstein (Igros Moshe OC^H vol. 1:55) suggests that the Mitzvah of Birchas Hamazon at the Seder, is in fact unique to the Seder. He opines that it is not simply a grace after a meal, but rather, it is in fact a Beracha specifically on the Mitzvah of Matzah. (See above, *Kiddush* and *Motzi Matzah* for a similar idea by Rav Shlomo Zalmen Auerbach regarding the Berachos before the aforementioned mentioned Mitzvos.)

The Tur (484:1) is of the opinion that on the night of the Seder, one

can be “Motzi” his friend with Birchas Hamazon, even if he isn’t obligated to Bentch. Avudraham (quoted by Bais Yosef, *ibid*) questions this ruling based on the Yerushalmi which states that only one who ate is allowed to Bentch. Bais Yosef dismisses this question with the premise that on the night of the Seder, the cup of Birchas Hamazon is obligatory and is no different that the Beracha on Matzah where one can be Motzi another, and is classified as the Beracha of a Mitzva and not simply a Beracha on food (See Mishna Berura 484:7 and Shaar Hatzion 5). This novel idea is consistent with the words of the Rambam (Chometz U’Matzah 7:10) that each one of the four Kossos were deliberately coupled and paired with a Mitzvah. The third cup is part and parcel with Birchas Hamazon, and the Beracha can rightfully be viewed as a Birchas Hamitzvos.

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.

PRACTICAL HALACHOS

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 Elijahhu 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.
- 4) Mishnah Berurah (480:10) suggests that it is intended to reinforce our Emunah. We reaffirm that just as we were freed from the slavery of Mitzrayim, we too, will be freed from this Galus. (See above, *Mitzrayim* and *Shulchan Orech*, for further discussions on this correlation.)

For an elaboration on this topic, see Artscroll's Eliyahu Hanavi book, written by my father in law Shlit"z, chapter 37. An excerpt is printed in the back of this booklet as well.



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 Ballei 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.

PRACTICAL HALACHOS

It is customary to recite Shir 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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ELIJAH HANAVI

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AVRAHAM YOM TOV ROTENBERG



כוס של אליהו
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 **כוס של אליהו**, *the Cup of Elijah*.

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 Elijah 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) Elijah 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 Elijah 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, Elijah together with Mashiach will make their long-awaited appearance.

מה ראָה לומר (שמות יב:מב) "ליל שמרים?" שבו עָשָׂה גְדֻלָּה לְצַדִּיקִים כָּשֵׁם
שְׁעָשָׂה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל בְּמִצְרַיִם. בּוֹ הִצִּיל לְחֻזְקָהּ, וּבּוֹ הִצִּיל לְחַנּוּנָהּ וְחִבְרִיו, וּבּוֹ
הִצִּיל לְדָנִיֵּאל מִגִּבְ אַרְיֹת, וּבּוֹ מְשִׁיחַ וְאַלְיָהוּ מִתַּנְדְּלִין. שְׁנֵאמַר (ישעיה כא:יב)
“אֵמַר שְׁמֹר אֶתָּה בַקָּר וְגַם לַיְלָה.”

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 *II Melachim* Ch. 19.

4. Mishaël 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 בְּנִסָּן נִגְאָלוּ בְּנִסָּן עֲתִידִין לִגְאָל *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.

וְהָנָה רְאִיתִי יֵשׁ בְּנֵי אָדָם בְּלֵיל הַפֶּסַח שְׂמוֹזְגִין כּוֹס מִיַּחַד וּמִעֲמִידִין עַל הַשֻּׁלְחָן וְאוֹמְרִים שְׁזֶה הַכּוֹס לְאַלְיָהוּ הַנָּבִיא. וְלֹא יֵדְעֹתִי מֵאֵין זֶה הַטַּעַם. וְנִרְאֶה דֶּהֱטַעַם יוֹצֵא מִהֶכָּא. שְׂאֵם יָבֵא אֱלֹהֵי הַנָּבִיא בְּלֵיל פֶּסַח בְּאֶשֶׁר אָנוּ מְקוּיִם וּמְחֻבָּיִם לֹא בְּזֶה הַלַּיְלָה, וְצָרִיד גַּם הוּא לְכוֹס. . . דִּמְאֶפְלוּ עֲנִי שְׂבִישְׁרָאֵל לֹא יִפְתָּחוּ לוֹ מֵאֲרָבַע כּוֹסוֹת. וְאִי לֹא הֵי כּוֹס מוֹכֵן לְשֵׁם אֵם בֶּן צָרִיכִים אָנוּ לְהִתְעַסֵּק לוֹ בְּכוֹס וְדִלְמָא יִמְנַע מִסֻּדָּר שֶׁל פֶּסַח. וְכָל הַמְרָבָה 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 לַיְלָה שְׁמֵרִים as proof that the night of Pesach is לַיְלָה מְשֻׁמֵּר 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 **וְלִפְתָּח הַפֶּתַח, כְּדִי לִזְכֹּר שֶׁהוּא לַיִל שֶׁמוֹדִים וּבִזְכוּת אֱמוּנָה זֶה יָבִיא**, *And the door is opened [for שֶׁפֶךְ הַחֵמֶד] 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: **וְזֵאֵין מִתִּירָאִין מִשִּׁים דְּבַר**, [by opening the door we show] *that we are not afraid of anything.* Then the Chofetz Chaim adds: **וְנוֹהֲגִין בְּאֵלוֹ מְדִינוֹת לְמִגַּז כּוֹס אֶחָד יוֹתֵר מִהֶמְסָבִין וְקוֹדִין אוֹתוֹ כּוֹס שֶׁל אֱלֹהֵי הַנְּבִיא לְרַמֵּז שֶׁאֵנוּ מֵאֲמִינִים שֶׁכֶּשֶׁם שֶׁגָּאֲלָנוּ הַשֵּׁם יִתְבָּרַךְ מִמִּצְרַיִם הוּא יִגְאֲלָנוּ עוֹד וְיִשְׁלַח לָנוּ אֶת אֱלֹהֵינוּ לְבִשְׁרָנוּ.** *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 **כוֹס 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 עֶרְלָא לֹא יֵאָכֵל 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, *בוס חמישי*, *fifth cup*, or *בוס רביעי*, *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 *בוס של אליהו* 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 Meuvin*, 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 של אליהו. 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.

