

Maaseh Nissim:

A Commentary on the Passover Haggadah

By Rabbi Ya'akov Lorberbaum
1760-1832

As explained by the Divrei Moshe
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Divrei Moshe:
An Introduction to Commentary
“Ma’aseh Nissim”
By Rabbi Mark B Greenspan

For the third year in a row I am completing an exposition of a traditional commentary on the Haggadah. Choosing from literally hundreds of different commentaries, each year I choose a new commentary with which to enliven my Seder. This yearly project has allowed me to explore the depths and the richness of this annual celebration as well as the beauty and profundity of the text which lies at the heart of this ceremony. It is continually amazing to me that a simple text of several hundred words can inspire so many different avenues of interpretations. While the questions that these commentators ask are often the same, the answers are as diverse as the scholars who wrote them.

My study of the Haggadah has allowed me to become familiar with scholars and great Jewish minds that I might not have otherwise encountered. For several months each year, I live with them and make them part of my life. At times it feels as though I have entered their Beit Midrash, and I am attentively listening to their teachings. In a sense, I take possession of them and embrace them so that they become a part of me. This has led me to some unexpected places. Two years ago I studied Reiach Dudaim, a commentary written by Rabbi David Dov Meisels toward the end of the nineteenth century. Who would have imagined that I would receive a phone call from Rabbi David Dov Meisels the great-great grandson (and name sake) of this scholar this past fall after he discovered my work? Rabbi Meisels, heir to his great-great grandfather’s learning, continues to publish and learn in Seagate, New York.

While the commentaries that I study each year are very different from one another, they also have much in common. They celebrate the artistry of the Hiddush, the novelle. Each work attempts to look carefully at the language of the Haggadah as well as the Bible in order to find new layers of meaning as a means of interpreting the texts of our tradition. They draw heavily upon the great books of our tradition while combining tradition with new ways of understanding our heritage.

In the case of the commentary, Ma’aseh Nissim, Rabbi Ya’akov Lorberbaum uses not only the Talmud and the traditional commentaries on the Bible, but also the work of Rabbi Moses Maimonides and the Zohar. And while we can not always say that his interpretations are P’shat, the literal contextual meaning of the text, Rabbi Lorberbaum makes a strong argument by rooting his insights in the words of the texts he quotes. Occasionally he draws upon Midrash that may part from the plain sense meaning of the Biblical text, but he always returns to the text of the Haggadah as well as the Bible to root his interpretation in the rich earth of our tradition. His explanations are never so far fetched that the reader can’t connect his interpretation with the plain sense meaning of the text.

Rabbi Lorberbaum draws heavily upon the work of Rabbi Eliezer Ashkenazi, a well known scholar in the sixteenth century. Rabbi Ashkenazi was the author of a compendium of law and lore called Ma’asei Hashem which also includes a commentary on the Haggadah. He quotes extensively from this work, often agreeing with the author and occasionally respectfully disagreeing with him. His commentary follows a similar style to that of Rabbi Ashkenazi with questions and answers. Even the names of these two works are similar to one another. In fact some scholars view Rabbi Lorberbaum’s work as an expansion on the work of Rabbi Ashkenazi.

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Rabbi Lorberbaum draws on the work of Rabbi Moses Maimonides and the Zohar though his work is neither a philosophical treatise nor a work of Jewish mysticism. He freely borrows the opinions of others to support and develop his own ideas. He is particularly fond of the commentary of the Ramban, Rabbi Moses Nachmanides who lived in Spain in the thirteenth century. Of special interest is the introduction which I have chosen to translate word for word. Using Maimonidean logic he asks how we can praise God since we cannot speak about God in human terms. God allows us to use inadequate human language to praise God much as a parent delights in the less than perfect and sometimes even outrageous language of a toddler.

Most of this commentary, however, is an explication and illumination of Rabbi Lorberbaum's work rather than an actual translation. I have chosen to study his commentary, translate it for myself and then present it to the reader much as I might do in a class room. In some cases I have taken the liberty of changing around the order of his questions or presenting his answers in a fashion that will hopefully be more understandable to the contemporary reader. Occasionally I have also created the questions where the author doesn't do so.

The reader will also note that each section begins with a section entitled, "Background" which is in italics typeface. These introductory remarks are my own. I try to give necessary background to understand what is troubling the author of this commentary. In this way when I am actually writing the commentary I am able to do so without invoking the name of Rabbi Lorberbaum. It is my hope that the reader will be able to encounter the author as I have. All paragraphs in italics are "Divrei Moshe," my own words. I have also put all Hebrew words in italics for the reader.

My annual Haggadah project has become something of a tradition now that I am completing my third volume. I usually begin working on the commentary shortly after Chanukah. Even with that amount of time I find it difficult to give these commentaries as much time as they deserve. Once again I have been unable to complete the commentary in time for it to be printed up for the Oceanside Siyyum HaBechorot so I have chosen to include only the commentary on the Maggid. I have included, however, the entire text of the Haggadah for those who might want to use this volume at their Seder.

Many people have helped me in completing this project. Still, I take full responsibility for any errors that may still exist in this commentary; I want to thank those who helped me along the way. First I must say thank you to my family for their patience in allowing me to complete this labor of love. I want to thank Cantor Yitzhak Lefkowitz, the cantor emeritus of Beth Shalom Oceanside Jewish Center who is a true Yodea Sefer to whom I can turn for guidance and assistance with difficult passages. I want to extend a very special thank you to my dear sister Bonni Schiff who was kind enough to edit and read the manuscript. And of course I want to thank the members of my congregation, the Oceanside Jewish Center who continue to inspire and challenge me.

I would like to conclude by dedicating this Haggadah to my sister and brother-in-law, Bonni and Steve Schiff, whose passion and joy for Judaism is truly awesome. While they often call me with questions, the truth is they have also taught me a great deal about what it means to be a Jew. I continue to take pleasure in witnessing the discoveries they make on their spiritual journey. May they go from strength to strength!

Finally, as with all my studies at this time of year I dedicate this Haggadah to the memory of my dear father, Daniel Greenspan who passed away on the third day of Passover thirty nine years ago. While he was not a scholar he would have been proud to witness what my sister and I have done with our lives. And of course, until 120 years, to our mother Esther at whose table we first experienced the Passover Seder.

LORBERBAUM, JACOB BEN JACOB MOSES OF LISSA (C. 1760–1832)

Polish rabbi and halakhist. His father, the rabbi of Zborow, died before Lorberbaum was born and his relative, Joseph Te'omim, brought him up. After his marriage he settled in Stanislav and engaged in business, but devoted most of his time to study. He frequently attended the lectures of Meshullam Igra.

When after a few years his business failed, he accepted the rabbinate of Monasterzyska where he founded a yeshivah. He was later appointed rabbi of Kalisz where he wrote most of his books and with exceptional humility published anonymously his work on parts of Shulhan Arukh, *Yoreh De'ah: Havvat Da'at*, a name by which he himself became known in scholarly circles when his authorship came to light. This work was accepted in the rabbinic world as a compendium of practical *halakhah*, and won him the reputation of an outstanding *posek*.

In 1809 he was invited to become rabbi of Lissa, long a center of Torah in Poland. Lorberbaum enlarged the yeshivah, to which hundreds of students streamed, among them many who later became great scholars and pioneers of the Hibbat Zion movement such as Elijah Gutmacher, Zevi Hirsch Kalischer, and Shraga Feivel Danziger.

Many of Jacob's contemporaries turned to him with their problems. During his time the war between the reformers and the rabbis flared up, and Lorberbaum, together with Akiva Eger and Moses Sofer, unleashed a vehement attack against the *maskilim* and the reformers. In Lissa, however, as in other towns of Great Poland that came under Prussian rule after the partition of Poland, the influence of the Berlin reformers grew continually stronger.

The schism between Lorberbaum and a large section of the community eventually became so great that in 1822 he decided to leave Lissa and return to Kalisz. There he devoted his time to study, rejecting all offers of rabbinic posts from large and ancient communities such as Lublin.

In 1830 he quarreled with a powerful member of the community who denounced him to the government, compelling him to leave Kalisz. On the way to Budapest, where he had been invited to become *av bet din*, he passed through the regional town of Stryj and was persuaded to remain there.

The following of his works have been published: *Havvat Da'at* (Lemberg, 1799); *Ma'aseh Nissim* (Zolkiew, 1801), on the Passover *Haggadah*; *Mekor Hayyim* (*ibid.*, 1807), novellae and expositions of the laws of Passover in the Shulhan Arukh together with the glosses of David b. Samuel ha-Levi and Abraham Abele Gombiner on the *Orah Hayyim* and novellae to tractate *Keritot*; *Netivot ha-Mishpat* (*ibid.*, 1809–16), on *Hoshen Mishpat*; *Torat Gittin* (Frankfort on the Oder, 1813), the laws of divorce and novellae on tractate *Gittin*; *Beit Ya'akov* (Hrubieszow, 1823), expositions on *Even ha-Ezer*; *Kehillat Ya'akov* (1831), on *Even ha-Ezer* and some sections of *Orah Hayyim*; *Derekh ha-Hayyim*, an anthology of liturgical laws for the whole year, first published with the prayer book (1828) and then separately (1860 or 1870); *Nahalat Ya'akov* (1849), expositions of the Pentateuch; *Emet le-Ya'akov* (1865), expositions of talmudic *aggadot*; *Imrei Yosher*, commentaries on the five *megillot*, each published at a different place and time; his ethical will (1875) and *Millei de-Aggadeta* (1904), sermons and response.

בְּדִיקַת חָמֵץ¹

BEDIKAT HAMETZ

**“On the eve of the fourteenth day search for Chametz
by the light of the candle.”
*Mishnah Pesachim***

**“Master of the Universe:
You know that it is our desire to do your will!
What stand in our way?
It is the leaven that is in the dough,
and the oppression of the nations.”
*Berachot 17a***

1. Several weeks prior to Passover we begin to put our home in order for the upcoming festival of Passover. Slowly we begin to consume all the left over *Hametz*, leavened food, that is still in the house and curtail the purchase of any foods which we can not eat on this Passover. Moving from room to room, we begin this massive undertaking by cleaning out all the drawers and cupboards so that our home is free of *Hametz*. Wasn't there a chocolate bar hidden in the top draw of the desk? The refrigerator becomes empty as we finish the last bits of bread, crackers, cookies and cakes. During these final weeks it never seems that there is enough to eat. We subject our homes, office, and even our cars to a thorough cleaning so that *Hametz* is removed from every corner of our existence.
2. Finally, a day or so before Passover the final conversion of the kitchen takes place. The counters are cleaned and covered, the refrigerator is thoroughly scrubbed out, and its shelves are covered with foil or paper. After scouring the oven we turn it on at a high temperature so that the remnants of *Hametz* are burned away. Today we have new challenges, such as a microwave, which must also be koshered and prepared for Passover. This is done by placing a bowl of water in the microwave and allowing the heated water to purge the inside of specks of non-Passover food. Room is made in the refrigerator and in select cupboards for the Passover food that we have been hoarding for weeks. The kitchen is usually ready a day or two before Passover so that it not only looks different but smells different as well. There is a newness about everything that makes one feel as though you have moved into a new dwelling.
3. During the last week or so before Passover our diet becomes erratic, as we forage through the last remnants of the pre-Passover *Hametz* leftovers to make a meal for ourselves. What are we to eat and where can we eat our last meals before the beginning of the festival of *Matzah*? *Hametz* has already been banished from the kitchen and *Matzah* cannot be included in our diet until the *Seder* begins. We are neither *Hametz* nor *Matzah*, "Passover" or "the year round." If you are fortunate enough to live in a community with kosher restaurants this is not a problem. But for those who don't, the days before Passover can be a time when we begin to experience the emptiness in our stomachs that our enslaved ancestors must have experienced.

¹ This opening section on the search for *Hametz* is not part of Rabbi Lorberbaum's Haggadah. It is my own *Kavvanot* on this practice. For the remainder of the *Haggadah*, sections in italics are the reflections of the translator and illuminator (Me) and not Rabbi Lorberbaum.

4. Having cleaned the house by the night prior to the eve of Passover of all forbidden food, we are now ready for the search to begin. Except for the last morsels of bread that have been carefully put aside, the house has been purged of *Hametz*. These crumbs and bits of bread have been saved for tonight when we will search the house for the forbidden food. We have been so efficient in cleaning our homes that we must hide our own *Hametz* to make sure that there is something to find, lest the blessing that we recite prior to the search *al biur Hametz*, "for the removal of *Hametz*," be in vain. Ten small pieces of *Hametz* are placed in plastic bags (we wouldn't want to get *Hametz* crumbs into the crevices of our home) and hidden by a member of the household so that the others search for them as well as any other *Hametz* that may have been overlooked.
5. The search should be carried out by the light of a candle. A flashlight may be used in place of a candle. While it is more practical and less dangerous, it loses some of the poetry of this ceremony. The searchers should make a point of checking out all parts of the house where *Hametz* might be found, not just the area where the ten pieces of *Hametz* have been hidden. This search should be more than a symbolic act.
6. In Kabbalistic tradition this search takes on cosmic overtones. In gathering the ten, we are also reuniting the ten divine attributes called *Sephirot*². These divine emanations are sparks hidden in the world that we must reveal and return to their source. With candle and feather in hand, we become modern day mystics searching for sparks of the divine in our homes. How strange, that the forbidden and the sacred should become one as we make our final preparations for Passover; and that a child's game can become a mystical act of *Tikkun*, or "cosmic repair." Are adults playing a child's game or are the children bringing redemption to an exiled God?
7. Prior to beginning the search we recite the following blessing:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו,
וְצִנָּנוּ עַל בְּעוֹר חָמֵץ.

*Barukh atta adonai Elohaynu melek ha'olam
Asher kiddshanu bimitzvotzav vitzeevanu al biur khametz.*

Praise to You, Adonai,
our God, Sovereign of the Universe
who has sanctified us with the commandments
and commanded us concerning the removal of *Hametz*.

²*Sephirot* - a term used in Jewish mysticism to describe the ten manifestations of the Divine which emanate into the world from the *Ayn Sof* (the hidden indescribable aspect of God, literally "without end"). In *Kabbalah*, existence is a product of God emanating out of Itself to create a dynamic interplay between the upper and lower worlds. The *Sephirot* are described with a variety of metaphors. Ultimately, there are no words to describe the indescribable reality of God or the relationship between God and the world. *Kabbalists* sometimes describe the system of *Sephirot* in which the hidden *Ayn Sof* is the roots and the *Sephirot* are the branches of the tree. The *Sephirot* are also referred to as the *Adam Kadmon*, "the Primordial Man."

8. *For the next few moments everything revolves around the grand search we now begin. With the house fully prepared for the great celebration, we peek beneath the furniture and in the corners of the bookshelves for any Hametz that may have inadvertently been left behind. We should search with holy intent and Kavannah. Once the Hametz has been discovered and gathered, the searchers recite the following declaration. Something miraculous takes place: with our words, that which was edible now becomes non-existent, the dust of the earth.*

כָּל חֲמִירָא וְחַמִּיעָה
 דְּאֶכָּא בְּרִשׁוּתִי
 וְדָלָא חֲמֵתָהּ וְדָלָא בְּעֵרְתָהּ
 וְדָלָא יִדְעֵנָא לֵה לְבָטֵל
 וְלֵהוּי הֶפְקֵר כְּעֵפְרָא דְאַרְעָא.
*Kol khamira v'khamiah
 D'eekah vir'shoot'tee
 D'lo khameetay u'd'lo biartay
 U'd'lo yadana lay labatayl
 V'lehavay hefker kiafra diara.*

All leavened products and Hametz
 which are in my possession
 which I have not seen nor removed
 and of which I am unaware shall be non-existent
 and owner-less like the dust of the earth.

9. *The following morning we participate in the Biur Hametz, the ceremony for the removal of the Hametz before nine-thirty. Any Hametz that was discovered the night before is taken outside and burned. While doing so the participants recite the following declaration:*

כָּל חֲמִירָא וְחַמִּיעָה דְּאֶכָּא בְּרִשׁוּתִי
 וְחֲזֵתָהּ וְדָלָא חֲזֵתָהּ, וְחֲמֵתָהּ וְדָלָא חֲמֵתָהּ,
 דְּבִעֵרְתָהּ וְדָלָא בְּעֵרְתָהּ,
 לְבָטֵל וְלֵהוּי הֶפְקֵר כְּעֵפְרָא דְאַרְעָא.

*Kol khamira v'khamiah d'eekah vir'shoot'tee
 Da'khazeetay u'd'lo khazeetay d'lo khameetay u'd'lo biartay
 Di'vee'artay u'd'lo vee'artay,
 labatayl v'lehevay hefker kiafra diara.*

All leavened food that is in my possession
 whether I saw it or not
 and whether or not I have removed it
 shall be non-existent and owner-less like the dust of the earth.

10. *This meditation can be recited upon burning the Hametz:*

May it be Your will,
that just as we remove all the *Hametz* from our house
and from all that we control, so may You help us to remove
all the impure forces from the earth and the evil inclination from within us
and renew our heart of flesh.

May all the evil forces and wickedness disappear like smoke.
Remove all tyrannical forces from the earth and all who cause anguish to the Divine Presence.
Remove them with a spirit of justice just as You did to Egypt and its idols long ago, at this time.³

11. *A Kavanah to keep in mind as we search for the Hametz:*

Bedikat Hametz is only the first quest we undertake as we welcome the festival of Passover.

*Tomorrow night, at the Seder, we will search for the Afikomen,
the final course of Matzah we will eat at our Passover meal.*

*We will search for new meanings and interpretations
in the words of the Haggadah.*

*We will ask four questions and then question whether or not
they are really questions at all.*

*In our final words, "Next year in Jerusalem,"
we will search for the path that leads home.*

*Passover is life: filled with mystery and misery, with secrets and salvation. We cannot escape Passover
anymore than we can escape who we are.*

*Paths lead to unexpected conclusions, and if we allow it,
Passover can also be full of wondrous surprises.
Whether we know it or not, we are all searching for something.*

*The object of our search is hidden deep within us.
We must find it with candle, feather, and spoon in hand.*

*The candle is the soul,⁴
the feather represents dreams and visions, and the wooden spoon is the vessel, the human body
we use to make this journey - That's all it takes to begin the quest.*

³ Based on translation in [A Different Night](#) by Noam Zion And David Dishon The Shalom Hartman Institute Jerusalem Page 14

⁴See Proverbs20:27 - "The human soul is God's lamp (Candle), revealing all its innermost rooms." My translation. The pronoun 'its' could also be translated as 'his.' To whom does it refer? To God (His), to the human being (his), or to the soul itself? The light of God within us reveals the depth of our own being.

The Author's Introduction⁵

By Jacob of Lissa Lorberbaum

Background:

Rabbi Jacob Lorberbaum begins his commentary with a passage that is both poetic and philosophical. He begins by addressing the bigger question of how it is possible for us to speak of God in the first place. Drawing on the writings of Rabbi Moses Maimonides, he points out that there are really no words that can sufficiently capture the essence of God. Because of our unique relationship with God, however, we are allowed to praise God and speak of God even when our words would appear to be somewhat demeaning since they cannot truly capture the greatness of God. This is not based on reason but on a unique covenant. Just as a child can speak "nonsense" and say things that might be perceived by others as insulting and yet still delight the parent, so too we can speak to God in a way that other nations are denied.

While much of this work is a paraphrase of Rabbi Lorberbaum's commentary on the Haggadah, the following passage is a direct translation of his opening essay. The opening and closing passages of this brief essay are an attempt to capture the poetry of his style. He begins, with this passage, to lay out the basic ideology behind his attempt to explain the Haggadah.

Let the righteous exult and the pious rejoice,⁶
 That the One who chose us from among all nations,
 (Even greater is the fact that He made this known to us),
 That He desires us
 more than all the most holy ones who are in heaven above,
 the angels who carry out His decree,
 to praise and exalt Him with all types of positive physical attributes
 even though these terms disparage the value of the Holy One.
 We learn in the following parable:
 Compare (one who praises God with physical attributes)
 "To one who praises a king who has gold coins
 By saying he has silver coins."
 And further, the author of The Guide⁷: writes
 "The more one praises Him, the more one diminishes Him."

This can help us understand the statement in the Talmud, "Nebuccadnezer thought he could outdo the praises and songs of David, until an angel came and slapped him in the face. He then exclaimed, 'How great are His signs; how mighty His wonders are!'"⁸

This statement would appear to be quite strange. How is it possible that one with an impure body and tongue, completely lacking in holiness, like Nebuchadnezzar, was able to praise the Most Blessed One more than our master, David, of blessed memory? It is well known to all that David's songs were recited through the divine inspiration.

⁵ This passage is as close to a translation of the Rabbi Lorberbaum as I could do. Most of the commentary is a paraphrase rather than a literal translation of the commentary. This opening passage however really sets the tone for much that follows.

⁶ The opening words of this passage begin with the four letters of the tetragrammaton: *Yiraninu Hatzadikim Viyagilu Hahasidim*: Note that Maimonides also begins his Mishnah Torah with such a mnemonic.

⁷ Moses Maimonides, the Guide to the Perplexed. Maimonides' basic premise is that we cannot describe God with positive attributes; we can only say what God isn't by describing him negatively: (God is not human; God is not many, etc.)

⁸ Sanhedrin, 92b

It is possible that the Talmud really means to teach us that when non-Jews speak God's praise, they actually diminish Him. However, because God loves the children of Israel, the chosen seed who are called 'the children of the living God,' He receives our thanksgiving and takes pleasure in our praise like a father who desires his son's love.

(God can be compared to a) father who loves his young son even though he still lacks in common sense and sometimes even speaks in a way that is not respectful to his father. Even so, the father delights and takes pleasure in his son's praise. So too, even though our praises are not so dignified, God covers them over with his love for us and takes pleasure in our praise.

Nebuccadnezer, may his bones be broken, wanted to be compared with David, but God had no desire to bestow this wonderful gift of praising God on an idolater. For the idolaters, such praise of God is considered disparagement of God, as if they are attributing physical attributes to God. Such praise is considered disgraceful as we stated earlier in the name of the author of The Guide.

The statement (in the Talmud) that, "Nebuccadnezer sought to outdo..." means that he tried to praise God with the type of images and praises that David used but this was considered a disparagement of God. Therefore the angel came and slapped his face (to rebuke him.). The reference to the angel here is a reference to the power of the intellect that is in every human being as we know from the other philosophical writings concerning many passages in the Talmud.⁹

(The Talmud continues :) "He then began by saying, 'How great are His signs..." Nebuccadnezer chose to praise God with descriptions of God's actions rather than with physical attributes.¹⁰

This matter seemed small in Nebuccadnezer's eyes until he recognized all the good that God performed for the house of Israel and only then did he stop praising God.¹¹ "For even if all the seas were filled with ink..."¹² God's love of us would not be complete without the telling of His goodness to us and, in particular, the story of the Exodus from Egypt since it is the source of all the goodness which He did, as I will explain below.

God placed upon us a strict obligation to tell of His miraculous deeds and to give thanks for every detail in this story. He did so in order to increase our reward from Him just as he most reasonably commanded each person to give thanks to the one who dealt kindly with him. He considered such thanksgiving a commandment. Therefore the pious and upright were able to order the story in the Haggadah in a complete fashion including praise and thanksgiving along with the story of His miracles and wonders.

God's purpose was well known to them. It included exalted matters and matters understood to their generation in a complete manner. We, however, are like the orphans of orphans with but a limited understanding that is narrower than a crevice. Many matters are hidden to the people of our generation so that they do not even understand the most obvious meanings.

⁹ The reference to an angel slapping Nebuccadnezer is meant to be figurative and not a literal statement. Nebuccadnezer realized the absurdity of trying to use positive attributes to praise God.

¹⁰ Recognizing that he could not use attributes to describe God he changed his language to praise of God's actions.

¹¹ In other words he recognized that he could not speak all of God's praises so he simply stopped and remained silent after this simple praise which appears in the Talmud.

¹² See the song sung on Shavuot, the Akdamut: Could we with ink the oceans fill, were every man a scribe of skill, the marvelous story of God's great glory would yet remain untold..."Meir ben Isaac Nehorai Translated by Joseph Marcus

I, young as I am, have arisen loaded with hardships
 Seek to understand the sages and their riddles
 And to figure out their purpose and meaning
 According to my poor intellect.
 It is appropriate to mention the passage
 By the author of the Guide
 “It is not fitting to delve into this book...”
 And leave the rest to you.
 And I hope with God’s help
 That the most upright of people
 Will receive some assistance in various places.
 As is well known that with words of Torah if one finds even one good thing,
 He saves the book as a whole.
 And those who judge me favorably,
 May God judge them favorably in their days of trouble.

Preface

Background

Rabbi Lorberbaum begins his commentary with a question of Halachah. If we are obligated to tell the story of the Exodus just as we are obligated to study Torah, or light Shabbat candles, why don't we recite a blessing prior to the fulfillment of the Mitzvah? There are other Mitzvot that are performed without a Blessing, and he is not the first commentator to ask this question. He answers the question by reviewing the previous literature on this question and then offering his own solution to this problem.

Does the Mitzvah of telling the story of the Exodus require a Blessing? We are required to recite a blessing before the performance of most Mitzvot. We are commanded to tell the story of the Exodus on the night of the Seder, and there is a verse that is the basis of this commandment: “You shall tell your child on that day...” Shouldn't we recite a blessing prior to the recitation of the Haggadah? Other scholars have tried to answer this question including the Rif and the Rashba, but these answers are insufficient.

1. The Rif suggests that we don't say a special blessing prior to the recitation of the Haggadah because the Kiddush at the beginning of the Haggadah already includes the Mitzvah of recalling the Exodus from Egypt. The Kiddush then is the blessing for the telling of the story of the Exodus. In the Kiddush, the Sabbath and the holidays are referred to as *Zecher Leetziat Mitzraim*, “a remembrance of the Exodus from Egypt.”

There two different Mitzvot with regard to remembering the Exodus from Egypt. One is to mention the Exodus, which we do on the Sabbath and every day for that matter, and the other is to tell the entire story of the Exodus on the anniversary of this momentous event. The first Mitzvah is referred to with the word *Zecher* and does not demand and in-depth telling, while the second Mitzvah is referred to with the word Haggadah, telling. The word Haggadah has an implication of ‘telling of the story’ and ‘drawing out the story’ so that every detail is included, much as we are commanded to do on Purim. When we read the *Megillah* one is forbidden to leave anything out of the story. The Kiddush speaks of mentioning the Exodus, not actually telling the entire story of the Exodus, so it cannot be the blessing for fulfilling the mitzvah of telling the story of the Exodus.

The Rashba suggests that we do not need a blessing at all for the recitation of the Haggadah since there is no minimal or maximal limit for how much one must say when telling the story of the Exodus. Even one word or phrase is sufficient for the fulfillment of this commandment. Since there are no guidelines for this Mitzvah, a blessing is not necessary.

The Rashba also is speaking about the Mitzvah of mentioning the Exodus, not the actual telling of the story that we perform on the night of Passover. The whole point of Passover is not to fulfill the minimal amount, but to maximize the telling of the story. So we don't really need a blessing to recall the Exodus but maybe we need one for the actual telling of the story according to his reasoning! Someone who simply mentioned the Exodus on Seder night would not have fulfilled his obligation on this occasion.

3. Rabbi Lorberbaum offers another answer to this question. We are not required to recite a blessing when performing any Mitzvah that includes a blessing as part of the act. For instance, when we recite the grace after meals, even though we are commanded to do so in the Torah (See Deuteronomy, 8:9), we do not say, "Praised are you...who commanded us to say the Birkat HaMazon," prior to reciting this prayer. Similarly when we recite the Haggadah since it includes the blessing, "Praised are you....who redeemed us and redeemed our ancestors from Egypt," we are not required to recite another blessing prior to the Haggadah as well.

The Order of the Night

קִדְּשׁ. וּרְחַץ. כַּרְפֵּס. יַחֲץ.
 מַגִּיד. רְחֵצָה. מוֹצִיא מַצָּה.
 מָרֹר. פּוֹרֵךְ. שְׁלֹחַן עוֹרֵךְ.
 צְפוּן. בָּרֵךְ. הַלֵּל. נִרְטָה.

**KADESH –URECHAT- KARPAS- YAHATZ
 MAGGID- RACHZAH -MOTZI MATZAH
 MAROR –KORECH- SHULCHAN ORECH
 ZAFUN- BARECH –HALLEL- NIRTZAH**

קִדְשׁ

Kadesh

Kavanah: A Meditation before the first cup of wine

הִנְנִי מוֹכֵן וּמְזוּמָן
 לְקַיֵּם מִצְוַת כּוֹס רֵאשׁוֹנָה מֵאַרְבַּע כּוֹסוֹת
 לְשֵׁם יְחִוּד קוֹדֶשׁ אֵל בְּרִידָה הוּא וְשִׁכְיִנְתִּיהָ
 כְּמוֹ שֶׁכָּתוּב בַּתּוֹרָה:
 אֲנִי יְהוָה וְהוֹצֵאתִי אֶתְכֶם
 מִתַּחַת סְבִלַת מִצְרַיִם

I am here, prepared and ready
 to fulfill the Mitzvah of drinking the first of the four cups
 in order to unite the Holy One of Blessing and His Divine Presence
 as it is written in the Torah:

“I am Adonai; I will take you out
 from beneath the burdens of Egypt.”

When the Seder coincides with Friday Night

וַיְהִי עֶרֶב וַיְהִי בֹקֶר
 יוֹם הַשְּׁשִׁי, וַיִּכְלֹ הַשָּׁמַיִם
 וְהָאָרֶץ וְכָל-צְבָאָם:
 וַיְכַל אֱלֹהִים בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי,
 מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה, וַיִּשְׁבֹּת בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי,
 מְכַל-מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה:
 וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶת-יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי,
 וַיְקַדֵּשׁ אֹתוֹ, כִּי בּוֹ שָׁבַת
 מְכַל-מְלַאכְתּוֹ, אֲשֶׁר-בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים לַעֲשׂוֹת:

“...Evening and Morning,
 The sixth day: The heaven
 and the earth and all they contained were completed.
 And God stopped on the seventh day
 from all the work he had been doing and rested on the seventh day 5
 from all the work he had been doing.
 And God blessed the seventh day
 and sanctified it, for on it He ceased
 from all His work which He created to do.”

סְבָרֵי מְרַנֵּן וְרַבָּנֵי וְרַבּוֹתֵי:

With the permission of all who are assembled:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
בוֹרֵא פְרֵי הַגֶּפֶן:

Praise to You, Adonai, our God, Sovereign of the universe
Who created the fruit of the vine.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר בָּנוּ מִכָּל-עַם,
וְרוֹמַמְנוּ מִכָּל-לָשׁוֹן,
וְקִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו,
וַתִּתֵּן-לָנוּ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּאַהֲבָה
(שִׁבְתוֹת לְמִנוּחָה)
(וּמוֹעֲדִים לְשִׂמְחָה,
חֲגִים וְזִמְנִים לְשִׂשׁוֹן
אֶת-יוֹם (הַשִּׁבְתָּה הַזֶּה וְאֶת-יוֹם)
חַג הַמִּצּוֹת הַזֶּה זְמַן חֲרוּתֵנוּ,
זָכַר לִיצִיאַת מִצְרָיִם. (בְּאַהֲבָה), מִקְרָא קֹדֶשׁ,
כִּי בָנוּ בְּחֵרְתָּ וְאוֹתָנוּ קִדְּשָׁתָּ מִכָּל-הָעַמִּים.
(וְשִׁבְתָּ) וּמוֹעֲדֵי קֹדֶשׁךָ
(בְּאַהֲבָה וּבְרַצוֹן) בְּשִׂמְחָה וּבְשִׂשׁוֹן הַנְּחַלְתָּנוּ:
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ,
מִקְדָּשׁ (הַשִּׁבְתָּה וְ)יִשְׂרָאֵל וְהַזְּמַנִּים:

Praise to You, Adonai, our God, Sovereign of the Universe
who has chosen us from among all nations,
lifting us up among all languages
and sanctified us with His commandments.
Adonai, our God, You have lovingly given us
(*The Sabbath Day for rest*),
festivals for happiness and times for rejoicing,
(*This Sabbath Day and*)
this festival of Matzah, season of our freedom,
as reminder of the Exodus from Egypt, (*lovingly*) as a sacred assembly.
You have chosen us and You have sanctified us apart from all peoples and
You have caused us to joyfully inherit (*the Sabbath*) and Your holy feasts.
Praise to You, who sanctifies (*the Sabbath*) and Israel and the Seasons.

When the Pesach Seder falls on a Saturday night

When Passover falls on a Saturday night, we add the following passages associated with the Havdalah service. The word Havdalah comes from the Hebrew root to distinguish or separate. This service is traditionally marks the conclusion of the Sabbath. Rather than blessing God who distinguishes 'the sacred and the profane' on the eve of the holiday, we acknowledge God as the One who distinguishes "the holiness of the Shabbat from the holiness of the festival."

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
בוֹרֵא מְאוֹרֵי הָאֵשׁ:

Praise to You, Adonai, our God, Sovereign of the Universe who creates the light giving fire.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
הַמְבַדִּיל בֵּין קֹדֶשׁ לְחַל
בֵּין אֹר לְחֹשֶׁךְ,
בֵּין יִשְׂרָאֵל לְעַמִּים,
בֵּין יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי לְשֵׁשֶׁת יָמֵי הַמַּעֲשֶׂה.
בֵּין קֹדֶשׁ שַׁבָּת לְקֹדֶשׁת יוֹם טוֹב הַבְּדִלָּת.
וְאַתָּה-יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מְשַׁשֶּׁת יָמֵי הַמַּעֲשֶׂה קֹדֶשֶׁת.
הַבְּדִלָּת וְקֹדֶשֶׁת אֶת-עַמְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּקֹדֶשֶׁתךָ.
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ,
הַמְבַדִּיל בֵּין קֹדֶשׁ לְקֹדֶשׁ:

Praise to You, Adonai, our God, Sovereign of the Universe,
who distinguishes between the holy and the profane,
between light and darkness,
between the Seventh Day and the other days of creation,
You have distinguished between the holiness of the Sabbath
and the Holiness of the festivals,
You have distinguished and sanctified Israel through Your Sanctity
Praise to You, Adonai, who distinguishes between the holy and the Holy.

Sheheyanu: The Blessing of Time

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
שְׁהַיָּיָנוּ וְקִיָּמָנוּ
וְהַגִּיעָנוּ לְזֶמַן הַזֶּה:

Praise to You, Adonai, our God
Sovereign of the Universe,
Who has kept us alive and sustained us and allowed us to reach this season.

Background

Like many commentators, Rabbi Lorberbaum ignores the Kiddush because technically it is not part of the Haggadah. We recite the Kiddush on the eve of all the holidays as a way of 'sanctifying the day' and welcoming the special occasion. The rabbi, however, adds a brief comment on the significance of the Sh'heheyanu blessing that follows the Kiddush on certain occasions. In some ways, his comments pick up on a theme which we will return to later in the Haggadah: "In every generation there have been those who have risen up against us to annihilate us, but the Holy One saved us from them..." The Haggadah focuses on the tension between exile and homecoming; this blessing is not only an expression of our gratitude for life but an expression of our sense of thanksgiving for having survived not only physically but spiritually.

The Text

The *Sh'heheyanu* Blessing appears to be repetitive; we have three expressions that all seem to have the same meaning: "Who kept us in life, sustained us, and allowed us to reach this occasion." It should have been enough to say, "Praised are You...who kept us in life to this day." Why the repetition in this blessing?

There are many expressions that we use to describe God that appear to be repetitive but which actually add a different dimension in our understanding of the Eternal. For instance, God is referred to as *Hai Vikayam*, "Alive and eternal." In the prayer *Baruch Sh'amar* we say, "Blessed is the One who is living and who exists for eternity." How are these expressions different from one another?

When we refer to God as 'living,' we are not speaking about His attributes (since God has no positive attributes) but rather about the quality of life that God brings to the universe. God is the source of life. He can only be referred to as 'Living' as long as the world exists. On the other hand, God is referred to as 'Eternal' as a way of speaking of His unchanging and constant nature.

Based on these two terms we can understand the *Sheheheyanu*, the blessing of time.

First we thank God for giving us life. Living in the Diaspora our lives are perilous at best; we live in constant danger of annihilation. Our very physical existence is something for which we should be thankful.

Next we thank God for sustaining us. Physical existence is not enough particularly in a world in which we could easily lose our identity and assimilate into the nation around us. So we also thank God for sustaining us, *v'kiyyemanu* (from the same Hebrew word as *kayyam*.) God not only gives us life but He has made us an eternal people by giving us the Torah.

And, finally, we also thank God for "allowing us to reach this occasion." God gives us the means of fulfilling each Mitzvah. It takes more than good intention or desire. God helps us reach our goal at this time as well.

Step 2: Washing hands

וְרַחֵץ

קודם אכילת הכרפס מביאים מים ונוטלים ידים בלי ברכה

Step 3: Dipping vegetable in salt water

כַּרְפָּס

מטבילים כרפס במי-מלח ומברכים

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָאֲדָמָה:

Praised are you Adonai, Sovereign of the Universe
who creates the fruit of the earth.

Step 4: Breaking the middle matzah

יִחִץ

עורך הסדר פורס את המצה האמצעית שבקערה לשני חלקים

Step 5: Recite the Haggadah

מְגִיד

Raising the matzot, the leader declares:

מגביהים את הקערה ומתחילים באמירת ההגדה

Ha Lachma Anya

This is like the bread of affliction:

הָא לַחְמָא עֲנִיָּא דִּי אֲכָלוּ אַבְהֵתָנָא בְּאַרְעָא דְּמִצְרַיִם. כָּל דְּכָפִין
יִיתֵי וְיִכּוּל, כָּל דְּצָרִיךְ יִיתֵי וְיִפְסֹת. הַשְּׁתָּא הָכָא, לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה
בְּאַרְעָא דְּיִשְׂרָאֵל. הַשְּׁתָּא עַבְדִּי, לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בְּנֵי חוּרִין:

**This is like the bread of affliction
That our ancestors ate in the
land of Egypt.**

All who are hungry come and eat;
All who are needy
come celebrate the Passover.
Now we are here.
Next year, in Land of Israel!
Now we are slaves. Next year free!

מַה נִּשְׁתַּנָּה הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה מִכָּל הַלַּיְלוֹת?
 שֶׁבֶכַל הַלַּיְלוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין חֲמֵץ וּמִצָּה. הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה כֵּלּוּ מִצָּה:
 שֶׁבֶכַל הַלַּיְלוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין שְׂאֵר יִרְקוֹת הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה מְרוֹר:
 שֶׁבֶכַל הַלַּיְלוֹת אִין אָנוּ מִטְבִּילִין אֶפְיֵלוּ פְּעַם אַחַת. הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה
 שְׁתֵּי פְּעָמִים:
 שֶׁבֶכַל הַלַּיְלוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין בֵּין יוֹשְׁבֵין וּבֵין מְסֻבִּין. הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה
 כֵּלְנוּ מְסֻבִּין:

How different is this night from all other nights!

On all other nights we eat leavened and unleavened bread; tonight we eat only unleavened bread!

On all other nights we eat all types of vegetables; tonight we eat bitter herbs!

On all other nights we don't even dip once; tonight twice!

On all other nights (we eat) sitting or leaning; tonight all of us lean!

Ha Lachma Anya

This is like the bread of affliction:

Background

It has been suggested that the opening statement of the Haggadah is similar to an overture before a great opera or show. It is not part of the telling of the story and yet it contains many of the dominant themes of the Passover, beautifully expressed through poetry. So what does this statement say and how does it fit into the Haggadah? Notice that this statement ties together past, present and future. We begin "This is the bread of affliction;" speaking in the past. We continue "All who are hungry come and eat", speaking in the present. And then we look toward the future: "Now we are here...next year..." Rabbi Lorberbaum picks up on this time frame and discusses not only past redemption, but future redemption as well in his commentary.

The Text

- 1. Why does the Haggadah begin in the Aramaic language? Why does Maimonides make a point of saying, in his version of the Haggadah, that this passage was not recited when the Temple was still standing?**

This statement was added to the Haggadah after the destruction of the Second Temple. It is meant to be read as a statement that expresses sorrow. Despite the fact that we were redeemed from Egyptian slavery, we are now living in exile once again, "like the Jews subjugated to Ahasveros". This bread which we eat at the Seder is like the bread of affliction which our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt...." The use of the Aramaic language at the beginning of the Seder is a reminder that we are still in exile and that this is not the true Passover. By referring to Matzah as the bread of affliction, we are also reminded that we are not yet redeemed.

There is an implicit ambivalence in our celebration of Passover and our recalling of the Exodus. After all, why celebrate past redemptions when we are currently unredeemed and in exile? The author explains this with a parable: Usually, someone who is liberated from prison has reason to rejoice not only in the fact that he was liberated but also to mark the day of his liberation as a time of celebration of an important event in his life. If the person is put back in prison, however, he has little cause to celebrate his original liberation. He would not want to celebrate past liberations if the present one has not yet taken place. This is not the case in recalling the Exodus from Egypt. By telling the story of the Exodus we gain the hope that God will redeem us again. We still have reason to celebrate because the original Exodus gives us reason to hope that God will redeem us again. Past redemption gives us hope for future redemption.

- 2. Why do we make the statement, “All who are hungry come and eat,” specifically on the festival of Pesach? Aren’t we obligated to help the needy on all of our festivals and not just Passover?**

Since there is still hope for redemption, our response should be to invite others to join us in celebrating this moment. Why are we inviting others to join us in celebration? We are celebrating because, “Now we are here and next year we will be in the land of Israel!” Telling the story of the Exodus is our way of expressing our hope in future redemption.

- 3. This statement, “All who are hungry,” appears to be out of place and time. It should have been said outside the door of one’s house so the needy would hear it and before the *Kiddush* so that the needy would have already joined the Seder. Why do we recite this passage indoors and after we have already begun the Seder?**

The opening statement of the Haggadah, “This is the bread of affliction...” is not a true invitation to the needy as much as it is an explanation of the purpose of telling the story of the Exodus and celebrating the Passover. As a result, it appears before the actual telling of the Exodus.

- 4. Why is Matzah referred to as *Lechem Oni*, “the bread of affliction?” Why do we say, “This is the bread of affliction...which our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt?” Later in the Seder we explain that the Israelites ate Matzah when they left Egypt according to the Torah!**

While the Jews ate Matzah when they fled from Egypt, we refer to it as “the bread of affliction” because this was also the food that they ate while they were living and toiling in the land of Egypt. The Egyptians worked the Israelites so hard that they did not even have time to allow their bread to rise.

- 5. Why does the Haggadah include the double language at the end of this passage? “Now we are here....Now we are slaves.”**

The two phrases at the end of this passage reflect a controversy in the Talmud about when the final redemption will take place: Tishri or Nissan. According to one point of view, the final redemption will take place in Nissan at the same time of year that we celebrate Passover, and according to the other point of view, the redemption will be in Tishri. These two points of view reflect different perspectives on the focus of the final redemption. Is redemption for Israel alone or for all humankind? If the final redemption is associated with Nisan and Passover then it is associated more with the destiny of the Jewish people since Passover marks the birth of the Jewish people. If the redemption is to occur in Tishri when we celebrate Rosh Hashanah, the birthday of the world, then the focus of redemption is more universal.

The sages also believed that similar to the Exodus from Egypt, the subjugation of the Jewish people would conclude six months prior to the final redemption. The Talmud says that Israel no longer had to serve the Egyptian six months prior to the Exodus. If we assume that the same thing would happen when the final redemption takes place then there are two possible scenarios for how this will occur. When you assume the redemption will occur will effect what you mean when you say, “Now we are....”

If, on the one hand, the redemption takes place in Tishri, then we must assume that the final redemption will take place one year from the upcoming month of Tishri. That would mean that the release of the Israelites from slavery would not occur until next Nissan and the final redemption the following month of Tishri. This would mean that at this time as we read the Haggadah the redemption has not yet begun, so the statement “Next year, in the land of Israel,” is not yet true. We can say, however, “Next year we will be free” since we will already be released from slavery, though not yet redeemed.

If, on the other hand, the redemption begins in the month of Nissan, then the release from slavery would occur on the upcoming Tishri and “next year” would refer to one year from now. The second statement would be true for the person who believes the redemption will take place in Nissan. Next Passover we would not only be free, but we would be in the land of Israel as well.

REDEMPTION BEGINS	Nisan year 1	Tishri year 1	Nisan year 2	Tishri year 2
In Nisan Then we say....	The redemption begins here. We are in exile: We say “ This year we are here... ”	Subjugation ends six months before the actual redemption	Redemption takes place: “ Next year we will be in the land of Israel ”	
In Tishri Then we say....	We dream of redemption. We are still in exile because the redemption does not begin until Tishri “ This year we are slaves. ”		One year after last Passover. We are released from slavery in anticipation of the final redemption but we are not redeemed yet, therefore we say: “ Next year we will be free. ”	Redemption takes place: Next year we will be in the land of Israel

Mah Nishtana

How is this Night Different...?

Background

OK, so the four questions are not really questions. What exactly are they? And if the purpose of the Haggadah is to tell the story of the Exodus from Egypt why do I need to explain why our customs are different on this night from all other nights? Rabbi Lorberbaum explains that at the heart of the Seder is an attempt to understand our way of life. We begin the telling not in the past but right here at the Seder Table in the present exploring the significance of our way of life. This will lead us to the past and help us understand who we are today. The questions in the Mah Nishtana, then, highlight the importance of the way we remember the Exodus today as Jews and how we tell the story through the commandments, customs and practices both divine and rabbinic.

1. Why were the sages so insistent on one asking questions of another? The *Braita* says, “If he has no wife (and there is no one else to ask), then let him ask himself.”

The whole point of the telling of the story of the Exodus (“And you shall tell it to your child on that day, ‘It is because of this which God did for me when I went forth from Egypt.’”) is not merely the telling of the story but the explanation of the Mitzvot associated with the Exodus from Egypt. This is implied in Exodus by the words *Ba'avur zeh*, “It is because of this” referring to the Matzah and Maror. Discussing the *Mitzvot* takes place in a dialogue with others, through questions and answers, and inquiry and discussion.

2. Why do the four questions single out these particular differences in the Seder and not others such as the four cups of wine?

The four statements neatly divide into two groups the first two statements about Matzah and Maror have to do with those commandments associated with Passover that are divine commandments taken from the Torah, and the second two statements have to do with rabbinic commandments which appear at the beginning of the Seder. They are dipping and leaning. In this way the Mah Nishtana reminds us that we must be exacting in observing and explaining both the commandments whose source is in the Torah and those which are derived from Rabbinic literature.

Avadim Hayyinu

We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt...

עֲבָדִים הָיִינוּ לְפָרְעָה בְּמִצְרַיִם. וַיּוֹצִיאֵנוּ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִשָּׁם, בְּיָד
חֲזָקָה וּבְזֵרוּעַ נְטוּיָה, וְאֵלֵינוּ לֹא הוֹצִיא הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא
אֶת־אֲבוֹתֵינוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם, הֲרִי אָנוּ וּבְנֵינוּ וּבְנֵי בְנֵינוּ, מִשְׁעֲבָדִים הָיִינוּ
לְפָרְעָה בְּמִצְרַיִם. וְאִפְּלוּ בְּלָנוּ חֲכָמִים, בְּלָנוּ נְבוֹנִים, בְּלָנוּ זְקֵנִים,
בְּלָנוּ יוֹדְעִים אֶת־הַתּוֹרָה, מִצָּוָה עָלֵינוּ לְסַפֵּר בִּיצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם. וְכָל
הַמְרַבֵּה לְסַפֵּר בִּיצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם, הֲרִי זֶה מְשֻׁבָּח:

We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt;

But the Lord our God took us out from there with a mighty hand and an out-stretched hand. And if the Holy Blessed One had not taken us out of Egypt we and our children and our children's children would still be subjugated to Pharaoh in Egypt. Even if all of us were wise, proficient elders and knowledgeable in the Torah, we would still be obligated to tell the story of the Exodus from Egypt. **Anyone who tells the story of the Exodus from Egypt at length, behold such a person is praiseworthy!**

מַעֲשֵׂה בְּרַבֵּי אֱלִיעֶזֶר, וְרַבֵּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ, וְרַבֵּי אֶלְעָזָר בֶּן־עֲזַרְיָה, וְרַבֵּי
עֲקִיבָא, וְרַבֵּי טַרְפוֹן, שֶׁהָיוּ מְסַבִּין בְּבֵנֵי־בְּרַק, וְהָיוּ מְסַפְּרִים
בִּיצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם, כָּל־אוֹתוֹ הַלַּיְלָה, עַד שֶׁבָּאוּ תַלְמִידֵיהֶם וְאָמְרוּ
לָהֶם: רַבּוֹתֵינוּ, הִגִּיעַ זְמַן קְרִיאַת שְׁמַע, שֶׁל שַׁחֲרִית:

אָמַר רַבֵּי אֶלְעָזָר בֶּן־עֲזַרְיָה. הֲרִי אָנִי כְּבֹן שִׁבְעִים שָׁנָה, וְלֹא זָכִיתִי,
שֶׁתֵּאָמַר יְצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם בַּלַּיְלוֹת. עַד שֶׁדָּרְשָׁה בֶן זוֹמָא. שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר:
לְמַעַן תִּזְכֹּר, אֶת יוֹם צֵאתְךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם, כָּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ. יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ
הַיָּמִים. כָּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ הַלַּיְלוֹת. וְחֻכְמִים אוֹמְרִים: יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ הָעוֹלָם
הַזֶּה. כָּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ לְהַבִּיא לִימּוֹת הַמְּשִׁיחַ:

Once, Rabbi Eliezer, Rabbi Joshua,

Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah, Rabbi Akiva, and Rabbi Tarfon were celebrating Passover in B'nai Brak. They were telling the story of the Exodus from Egypt all that night.

Finally, their students came and said to them: "Rabbis! **The time has come to say the morning Sh'ma!**"

Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah said: "Though I am like a seventy year old man I have not yet been worthy of offering a proof text for mentioning the Exodus from Egypt at night until Ben Zoma came and expounded it:

**"...In order that you may remember the day of your going out of Egypt
all the days of your life."** (Deuteronomy 15:3)

"The days of you life" refers to the days. "All the days of your life" includes the nights."

The sages said: "The days of your life" refers to this world. "All the days of your life" includes the world to come."

We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt

Background

This passage is both an introduction to the Seder and an answer to the "Four Questions" which we have just asked. It presents the basic theme of the Seder succinctly and directly: "We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt but the Lord our God took us out with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm." But commentators have been troubled by the fact that we never directly answer the four questions that we just asked. Rabbi Lorberbaum explores the connection between the four questions and this passage. He also explores the nature of the redemption. God did not simply take us out but He did so with "a mighty hand." This act created an intimate connection between God and Israel that would have implications for generations to come.

1. How is this statement an appropriate answer to all the questions that were just raised in the Mah Nishtana?

Even someone completely familiar with the Torah knows that the reason for many of the commandments is hidden from us and difficult for us to comprehend. The Haggadah is written for the common person ("for women and children") who has even less knowledge of Torah. The Haggadah, therefore, begins with a more general statement applied not only to Passover but to all the commandments. We observe the commandments because God is our sovereign and we must accept His decrees whether or not we fully comprehend all of them.

- 2. Why do we make a point of saying that, “We were slave to Pharaoh in Egypt”? It should have been enough to say, “We were slaves in Egypt” What does the mention of Pharaoh add to this statement?**

The opening statement of the Haggadah begins we were slaves to Pharaoh in order to contrast our obedience to Pharaoh with our obedience to God. When we were Pharaoh’s slaves we obeyed his will whether or not we understood his purpose; how much more so should we now keep God’s will.

- 3. The passage says that God took us out “with a mighty hand.” What does this expression add our understanding of this passage?**

The Haggadah states that God not only took us out of Egypt, but that He did so with “a mighty hand.” It emphasizes the greatness and the graciousness of God’s acts. There were many ways through which God could have liberated the children of Israel from Egypt that would have made His presence less apparent. For instance, God could have caused everyone in Egypt to have a change of heart and to free the Israelites. By showing “His hand,” so to speak, God tied His own reputation to that of the children of Israel in the eyes of the world so that when Israel would later sin, God couldn’t simply write the nation of Israel off as a failed experiment. That is why Moses says to God, “What will the nations say...?” Moses understood that anything that happened to Israel would now reflect on God as well. By redeeming Israel with “a mighty hand” God’s destiny was now tied to that of the Jewish people. In other words, if God punished Israel, Israel’s failure would be God’s own failure, much as a parent often feels like a failure when his child misbehaves or acts in an improper fashion.

This line of reasoning applies specifically to the people of Israel after the Exodus from Egypt. After all, God had promised the people that he would take them out of Egypt since the time of Abraham. This was a right and not merely a privilege since it was tied to their covenant with God or possibly *Zechut Avot*, the worthy merit of the forefathers. But once they were in the wilderness and God had fulfilled his promise to the forefathers He was no longer obligated to stop them and help them when they threatened to return to Egypt. Why did He do so? Not because of some past obligation but because He had made a full and complete commitment to the Israelites to redeem them with an outstretched arm, that is, publicly.

- 4. Are the terms “enslaved” and “subjugated” really the same? Avadim Hayyinu begins “we were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt...” but it ends with “...both we and our children and our children’s children would be subjugated to Pharaoh.” Why does the author assume that if God had not taken us out of Egypt we would still be subjugated to Pharaoh? Isn’t it possible that we would have been freed through some other means?**

The word *Eved* only applies to someone who is an indentured servant; that is, someone who is a slave for a limited amount of time. God had told Abraham that his children would be slaves for four hundred years. So while they were in Egypt, they were slaves in this sense of the word. God had promised to redeem the people of Israel after four hundred years, so their liberation was guaranteed. When the Israelites threatened to return to Egypt when they were in the wilderness God had already fulfilled his promise. He could have freely allowed this to happen and they could easily have become subjugated eternally. Similarly, since we were redeemed with an outstretched arm, we now were assured of redemption. Even though *Zechut Avot*, our forefather’s merit had a time limit, God’s glory has no time limit. Not to redeem Israel would still have been a desecration of God’s name.

This idea of *Zechut Avot* is a central concept in Rabbinic thought. The idea is that we receive God's blessing not because we are worthy of it but because of the inherent worthiness of our ancestors. We invoke the worth of our ancestors often on the High Holy Days; we ask God to forgive us not because we are worthy of forgiveness but because of the extraordinary deeds of our ancestors who came before us.

Similarly, the idea of desecrating God's name is also a basic concept in rabbinic literature. Our actions can sanctify or desecrate God's presence in the world. What we do reflects on God's reputation. So God's glory is dependent on us. This passage in the Haggadah concludes, then, that even if we were all wise, proficient, and knowledgeable we would still be obligated to tell the story of the Exodus. The point here is not simply telling the story (after all, "what was, was") but understanding the profound nature of God's loving kindness and graciousness. God performed His gracious acts despite our being unworthy and His acts have shaped our existence in ways that we do not even understand. We tell the story of the Exodus to understand the nature of God's continuing presence in our lives.

This is the basic theme of the Great Hallel passage that we recite later in the Seder. "Praise the Lord who is God, His loving kindness is eternal." God's gracious acts continue to influence our lives forever and were not just part of the generation for which God performed these acts.

Because this is so, "One who increases the telling of the Exodus from Egypt is praise worthy."

Ma'aseh B'rebbe Eliezer:

The Rabbis in B'nai Brak

1. Was it really necessary for the sages in B'nai Brak to spend the entire night reviewing the story of the Exodus from Egypt?

The fact that the sages in B'nai Brak spent so much time retelling the story of the Exodus when this story could be simply told in an hour or two is proof that they were delving into the implications of the story. As we have seen in the commentary above, the sages studied each of God's acts of kindness to understand how these acts have influenced not only the generation that went forth from Egypt but all future generations as well. This story, then, is a proof text for the final statement in the prior paragraph that anyone who spends time at length reviewing the story of the Exodus is praiseworthy.

A side note:

Rabbi Eliezer Ashkenazi in his commentary, *Ma'asei Adonai* on the Haggadah, offers an alternative explanation of why the Haggadah suggests that we might still be subjugated to Pharaoh if God had not taken us out of Egypt. The *Ma'asei Adonai* comments that we would still be subjugated to the Egyptians if God had not taken us out because then the Egyptians would have been the ones who liberated us. This would mean that we would constantly be humbled and obligated before the Egyptians because they freed us from Egypt.

But this is only one possible scenario for how the Israelites might have been freed if God had not done it. It is possible that the Israelites might have risen up and rebelled against the Egyptians, thus freeing themselves. In such a case, the Israelites would not have been subjugated to the Egyptians after their liberation. Yet the Haggadah tells us that by placing Himself at the center of the liberation from Egypt, God created a new and unprecedented relationship with Israel. The essence of Passover is not just that God took us out but that he took us out "with a mighty hand" as the Haggadah and the Torah teach us.

Amar Rabbe Elazar ben Azariah

Rabbi Elazar's Homily

Background:

The Haggadah is a medley of materials taken from various parts of rabbinic and medieval literature. The author (or, better yet, the editor) of the Haggadah often borrows passages from this literature and uses them for his own purpose.

Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah's passage comes from the first chapter of Mishnah Berachot which deals with the laws related to the daily recitation of the Sh'ma, our Jewish pledge of allegiance. The Sh'ma is made up of three passages: "Hear O Israel the Lord our God the Lord is one... You shall love the Lord your God..." (Deuteronomy 6:4-9) "You shall hearken diligently to the Lord...." (Deuteronomy 11:13-21), and the passage concerning placing tzitzit, fringes, on the corners of one's garments (Numbers 15:37-41.)

This final passage ends, "I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the Land of Egypt..."). Since the sages concluded that the commandment to wear fringes is only an obligation during the day time (when one can see them), the sages debated whether or not one had to mention the Exodus (which is included in the last part of this passage) in the evening.

The Haggadah quotes most, but not all, of the Mishnaic passage. Most importantly it leaves out the first and most important part of the Mishnaic statement: One should mention the Exodus from Egypt at night. The sages disagree with this conclusion with which Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah struggles. This leads Rabbi Lorberbaum to raise the following questions and offer the following interpretation that distinguishes between the daily custom of mentioning the Exodus vs. actually telling the story on Passover night.

1. What is the connection between mentioning the Exodus as part of the daily liturgy and retelling the story of the Exodus on the eve of Passover?

There are two different Mitzvot in the Torah related to how we recall the story of the Exodus: one is to mention or 'to remember' the Exodus from Egypt each day, and the other is to tell the story of the Exodus on Passover eve. The purposes of these two sacred acts are different from one another.

The telling of the Exodus from Egypt can be compared to the reading of the Megillah; it is an act performed in conjunction with the anniversary or the locality of an important event. We recall it and describe it in all its details as a way of holding on to the importance of the event each year.

The daily mentioning of the Exodus serves a different purpose. If the purpose of mentioning the Exodus was simply to recall the Exodus, it would actually be demeaning to God. After all, why place so much emphasis on one particular act of divine grace when God has performed so many acts of kindness toward us? The purpose of mentioning the Exodus each day is to remind us that God redeemed us in order to acquire us as His people. The details are not as important as simply the memory that God redeemed us to make us His nation. This idea is reflected in the word *Geulah*, "redemption," which has this connotation: to redeem is to take ownership of something. (This is true both in English and in Hebrew. When we redeem something, we take possession of it.) When we mention the Exodus each day, then, we are making a statement of our unique relationship to God. The daily recollection of the Exodus is not to contemplate God's manifold acts of kindness but to celebrate our relationship to God. Ben Zoma was of the opinion that one should make mention of this fact both day and night with the recitation of the Sh'ma.

2. Why does the editor of the Haggadah bother to quote the opinion of the sages when his primary concern seems to be with supporting the opinion of Ben Zoma, that one should mention the Exodus from Egypt at night?

The statement in the Mishnah is concerned with the mitzvah of ‘mentioning the Exodus’ daily rather than the commandment of retelling the story of the Exodus on Passover eve. Rabbi Elazar and the sages disagreed on when this commandment should be fulfilled: are we obligated to mention the Exodus both day and night or is it sufficient to make mention of the Exodus only during the day? The sages followed the opinion of Rabbi Joshua ben Levi who said that the actual redemption took place during the day and therefore we are only obligated to mention the Exodus during the daylight hours. Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah, drawing on the interpretation of ben Zoma, claims that the redemption began at night and was completed during the day. We should mention the act of redemption both day and night. By leaving out the opening passage in the Mishnah which supports ben Zoma’s opinion, the Haggadah makes the debate between the sages and Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah more even handed.

3. The author of the Haggadah quotes the Mishnah (Berachot 1:5) in order to teach us that we are obligated to mention the Exodus from Egypt even at night, following the opinion of Ben Zoma and Rabbi Elazar Ben Azariah. And yet the Haggadah leaves out the very first line of the Mishnah statement that explicitly makes this statement (“*One must mention the Exodus at night. Rabbi Elazar Ben Azariah said...*”)? Why does the Haggadah only quote part of the Mishnah and not the whole thing?

Earlier in the Haggadah we said, “We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt.” We learned that the Haggadah begins with this statement so that we will realize that the Exodus is the very foundation not only of the Passover Seder but of all the commandments in the Torah. The debate in this passage further deepens this fundamental principle of faith. It provides us with an understanding not only of Passover but of the importance of God’s redemption of the Jewish people in general. It places in a larger context.

- It teaches us why we must constantly reiterate the fact that God took us out of Egypt not only in relationship to Passover but to all the commandments.
- The redemption is about more than miracles: it is a statement of the unique relationship that Israel has with God. God acquires us.
- The purpose of mentioning the Exodus is not simply to recall the Exodus but to affirm the truth of the redemption.
- This statement from the Mishnah is not the basis for telling the story of the Exodus on Passover night, but for understanding the need to reaffirm this basic idea each day (and night).
- This controversy is about whether or not the affirmation must take place in conjunction with the time of day when the actual redemption of the Israelites took place. Thus we have the controversy between the sages and ben Zoma.

The rationale for retelling the story of the Exodus on Passover eve is not this Mishnah (even though it might appear that way) but rather a simpler notion. One should retell the story of ones miraculous salvation from slavery at the time when the event took place. The Passover Seder, then, is a historical recollection rather than a theological affirmation of why we observe the commandments. It is a time to recall rather than a time to affirm. The daily recollection of the Exodus reminds us of our unique relationship to God.

We are commanded to see ourselves “as if we personally went forth from Egypt” for this reason. The Exodus has shaped our very existence. A miracle is not a historical event but an event that continues to shape our essence and being. This is what the psalmist means when he says “His kindness is forever.”

God's redemptive acts continue to influence and change the world. Ben Zoma was of the opinion therefore that we must constantly remember the miraculous events associated with the Exodus because these events continue to shape our self-perception and identity.

Baruch Hamakom, Barukh Hu

Praised is the One who is present everywhere.

בְּרוּךְ הַמָּקוֹם. בְּרוּךְ הוּא. בְּרוּךְ שֶׁנָּתַן תּוֹרָה לְעַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל. בְּרוּךְ הוּא כִּנְגִיד אַרְבַּעַה בְּנִים דְּבִרְהַ תּוֹרָה. אֶחָד חֲכָם, וְאֶחָד רָשָׁע, וְאֶחָד תָּם, וְאֶחָד שְׂאִינוּ יוֹדְעַ לְשֹׂאוֹל:

חֲכָם מָה הוּא אוֹמֵר? מָה הָעֵדוּת וְהַחֲקִים וְהַמְשֻׁפָּטִים, אֲשֶׁר צָנָה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֶתְכֶם? וְאִף אֶתָּה אֲמַר-לוֹ כְּהִלְכוֹת הַפֶּסַח: אֵין מִפְּטִירִין אַחַר הַפֶּסַח אֶפִּיקוֹמָן:

רָשָׁע מָה הוּא אוֹמֵר? מָה הָעֵבֶדָה הַזֹּאת לָכֶם? לָכֶם וְלֹא לוֹ. וְלִפִּי שֶׁהוֹצִיא אֶת-עַצְמוֹ מִן הַכָּלֵל, כִּפָּר בְּעֶקֶר. וְאִף אֶתָּה הִקְהָה אֶת-שְׁנָיו, וְאֲמַר-לוֹ: בְּעִבּוֹר זֶה, עָשָׂה יי לִי, בְּצִאתִי מִמִּצְרַיִם, לִי וְלֹא-לוֹ. אֵלּוּ הֵיךָ שֵׁם, לֹא הֵיךָ נִגְאָל:

תָּם מָה הוּא אוֹמֵר? מָה זֹאת? וְאֲמַרְתָּ אֵלָיו: בְּחֻזֶּק יָד הוֹצִיאָנוּ יי מִמִּצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים:

וְשֹׂאִינוּ יוֹדְעַ לְשֹׂאוֹל, אֶת פֶּתַח לוֹ. שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וְהִגַּדְתָּ לְבִנְךָ, בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא לֵאמֹר: בְּעִבּוֹר זֶה עָשָׂה יי לִי, בְּצִאתִי מִמִּצְרַיִם:

יְכוֹל מִרְאֵשׁ חֲדָשׁ, תִּלְמוּד לֹמֵר בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא. אֵי בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא. יְכוֹל מִבְּעוֹד יוֹם. תִּלְמוּד לֹמֵר. בְּעִבּוֹר זֶה. בְּעִבּוֹר זֶה לֹא אֲמַרְתִּי, אֶלֶּא בְּשַׁעַה שֵׁישׁ מִצָּה וּמְרוֹר מְנַחִים לְפָנֶיךָ:

Praised is the One who is present everywhere. Blessed is the One.
Blessed is the One who gave the Torah to the people Israel. Blessed is the One.

About four types of children the Torah speaks: one is wise; one is wicked; one is simple; and one does not know how to ask.

The wise one, what does he ask?

“What are these testimonies, statutes and judgments which the Lord our God commanded you?” So you shall teach him all the laws of Pesach, such as, ‘One may not eat anything after the Pesach offering.’

The wicked one, what does he ask?

“What is this service to you?”

He says ‘to you’ not ‘to me...’ Since he excluded himself from the community he has denied the cardinal principle of Judaism. Therefore set his teeth on edge by telling him: “It is because of that which the Lord did for me when I went forth from Egypt.” ‘For me’ and not ‘for him;’ had he been there he would not have been redeemed.

The simple one, what does he ask?

“What is this?” You shall say to him, “With a strong hand did the Lord take us out of Egypt, from the house of bondage.” (Exodus 13:14)

And the one who does not know to ask, you must open the subject for him, as it says, “You shall tell it to you child on that day, ‘It is because of that which the Lord did for me on that day when he took me out of Egypt.’” (Exodus 13:8)

About Four Types of Children....

Background

The next passage introduces one of the best-known sections of the Haggadah: the four children. Let’s try not to call them the four ‘sons.’ It begins with a brief but lovely poem in which the Maggid praises God who is present everywhere (HaMakom) and who has given the Torah to His people (Sh’natan Torah Li’amo Yisrael.) While it does not appear to relate directly to the story of the Exodus or to the four children, it is most significant that it also contains four verses (like the four sons). Each verse begins with the word Baruch, “Praised.” The number four figures prominently throughout the Haggadah but especially in the next passage that begins, “The Torah speaks of four types of children...”

The commentary asks, is there a connection between these four verses that is deeper than a simple numerical correlation? Rabbi Lorberbaum tries to answer this question by drawing on the writings of Bakhya Ibn Pakuda and Moses Maimonides. He goes much farther and draws an entire structure for the Haggadah based on the number four. While the rabbi does not begin this discussion with several questions, as he does elsewhere in the commentary, he attempts to answer three basic questions to clarify his understanding of the Haggadah.

Praised is the One who is present everywhere:

1. What is the reason for the four statements of praise that precede the four children in the Haggadah?

In “The Duties of the Hearts,” Bakhya Ibn Pakuda suggests that there are four levels at which people can connect with the divine. These four levels are directly connected to the four children and the four statements of praise that introduce them in the *Haggadah*. The *Haggadah* praises God who redeemed all four types of children from Egypt whether or not they were worthy of redemption. After all, we know that God redeemed many people who were not completely worthy of redemption. For instance, Datan and Aviram, the two Israelites who constantly rebelled against Moses and encouraged the Israelites to return to Egypt, were taken out of Egypt despite their wickedness. Even the wicked ones who were undeserving of redemption experienced the Exodus. Words of praise are offered on their behalf. The words of praise differ, however, with each person’s spiritual and intellectual attainment.

- a. **Blessed is “The Place.”** The highest level of faith is attained by the one who comes to faith through reason and meditation just as our forefather, Abraham, did. To such a person God is *HaMakom*, literally “The one who present everywhere”¹³ because he experiences God’s presence and providence as a power that fills the entire universe and surrounds the entire universe. In the words of Jewish philosophers, “God is the place of the universe and the universe is not God’s place.”
- b. **Blessed is He.** The heretic denies the truths of *Torah* and refuses to contemplate the existence of God through the intellect. For this person, God is merely *Hu*, “He,” or, better yet, “It.” While he experienced God’s power in the Exodus from Egypt, he continues to deny it. He was really redeemed despite himself and even against his own will. Had it been left up to him, he would have remained behind in Egypt. So we praise God for redeeming him, but his connection to God is distant. God is a “distant cause” in his life and not an immediate presence.
- c. **Blessed is the one who gave *Torah* to His people Israel.** This blessing is for those who come to faith through the study of the *Torah* and the insights gained through the contemplation of our tradition. The simple child learns *Torah* and comes to his faith through the text and not through the exertion of reason and the intellect. The *Torah* allows him to have an understanding of God. So too, some of the Israelites were worthy of redemption because they would eventually accept the *Torah* at Sinai. In his praise of God, we say, “Blessed is the one who gave *Torah* to His people Israel.”
- d. **Blessed is He.** The final level of faith is the person whose faith is based on that which he has witnessed his forefathers doing. It is not based on an intellectual or rational commitment, but on simply mimicking the generations that came before them.

2. Why is God referred to as *HaMakom*, - “the Place” - in this poem and what is the connection between the name *HaMakom* and the wise child?

The word *HaMakom* is a common name of God used throughout rabbinic literature. Rabbi Lorberbaum sees a connection between divine providence and the divine name, *HaMakom*. According to Moses Maimonides (The Guide, Book 3, Chapter 17-18), divine providence exists for a person only to the extent that the person has the intellectual and spiritual faculties with which to experience it. In other words, the wise person experiences divine providence more than the other three people in this *Midrash* and in Bakhya’s typology. That is why the first statement in this poem applies to the *Chacham*. The wise person experiences God as the place of the world. In contrast to the wise person who refers to God as the “Place of the World,” the wicked and the one who does not know how to ask have not used their intellect to attain an understanding of God’s existence and therefore are not the beneficiaries of Divine providence. For them God is distant. God is *Hu*; God is “it,” or “He.”

3. Is there a connection between the four statements of praise, the four children, the four cups of wine and the four promises of redemption in the *Torah*?

All the fours in the *Seder* are interconnected. Each of the four children of the *Haggadah* was the recipient of redemption for a different reason and each one receives a different promise of redemption from God. The four cups of wine, then, each celebrate a different aspect of the redemption and are connected to the four different children in the following *Midrash*:

¹³ Literally “The Place”

- a. The wicked person was redeemed because of the covenantal promise of redemption and not because he was truly deserving of redemption. God had promised our forefathers that he would take their children out of Egypt after four hundred years, and God did so even when they were not worthy. For this child, we find the promise, “I took you out of Egypt (even though you were undeserving).”
- b. The one who does not know how to ask was redeemed because of the merit of our forefathers (*Zechut Avot*). Because he chose to remain faithful to the traditions of his forefathers even when he didn’t understand all of them, he merited redemption. To this child, God made the promise “I saved you (from servitude).”
- c. The third child, the simple person, was redeemed from Egypt because of the merit of *Torah*. Some of the people of Israel were redeemed not because of what they did but because of what they would do. He knew that they would accept the *Torah* and therefore merited redemption even before they had done so. To this child, God said, “I will take you to be my people (by giving you the *Torah*).”
- d. Finally, the wise person was redeemed because of the merit he accrued through the performance of *Mitzvot*. Because he showed his commitment and even self-sacrifice by maintaining the covenant of circumcision and by sacrificing the Pascal Lamb, he was deserving of redemption. And, finally, to this person God promised, “I will redeem you.” The final promise will be fulfilled in the future and is expressed in the last part of the *Haggadah*, which speaks of the ultimate redemption. The *Chacham* is promised the full and complete redemption in the end of time.

The basic themes of each of these promises are expressed when we drink each of the four cups of wine as well.

- a. When we make *Kiddush* and drink the first cup of wine, we speak of *Pesach* as *Z’man Hayrutaynu*, “the Season of our Freedom.” This is a reference to the first step in Israel’s redemption. According to the *Midrash*, six months before the actual Exodus, the Israelites were liberated from slavery and no longer had to serve the Egyptians. This is the fulfillment of the promise “I will save you.”
- b. The second cup of wine comes at the end of the *Maggid*, the telling of the story of the Exodus before the meal, and concentrates on the plagues and the other miracles in Egypt. It is an expression of the promise, “I will take you out.”
- c. The third cup of wine comes at the end of the *Birkat HaMazon*, which speaks of the gifts of the land and the gift of the *Torah*. It is an expression of gratitude for the third promise, “I will take you to be my people,” which we have already seen is a reference to the gift of *Torah*.
- d. The final cup of wine is an expression of gratitude for the future redemption that God has promised us: “I will redeem you”. Later Rabbi Lorberbaum will explain how the second half of the *Haggadah* refers to future redemption.

The Use of the Number Four in the Haggadah

Number of Cups	Promise	The Four Children	Reason worthy of redemption	Type of Person in Hovot Halevavot	Place in the Seder and connection	Introductory Statement
First Cup	I will save you	The Wicked One	Brit Avot -The covenant of our forefathers	Denies the validity of Torah	The Kiddush “Zman hayrutaynu” Celebrating freedom	Baruch Hu
Second Cup	I will take you out	The one who does not know how to ask	Zechut Avot - The merit of our forefathers	The one who observes simply as a way of imitating his forefathers	After the telling and the ten plagues – we celebrate the going out	Baruch Hu
Third Cup	I will take you to be my people	The simple One	Zechut Torah – The merit of accepting the Torah	The one who arrives at truth through the study of Torah	After the Grace after meals we celebrate gifts of Torah and land	Baruch Sh’natan Torah L’amo Yisrael
Fourth Cup	I will redeem you	The Wise One	The merit of performing the commandments	The one who arrives at the truth through reason and contemplation	This cup celebrates the future redemption	Baruch Hamakom

Keneged Aarbaah Banim The Four Children

Background

The four types of children we encounter in the Haggadah are based on four verses in the Bible that contain the theme of telling children about the Exodus from Egypt. Why does the Torah repeat this same injunction four times? From the standpoint of the sages, these verses cannot be repetitive since every word in the Torah is meaningful. Each verse must add something to our understanding of this obligation. The sages concluded that the four verses must refer to four types of people who we encounter in our daily lives. They are also found at the Seder table. Each asks about the significance of the Exodus and the meaning of the customs we enact on the night of the Pesach offering. Because they are different in intellect and temperament, each deserves an answer that will help him understand the story of the Exodus on his own level.

Three of the verses contain questions and answers, and the fourth is a statement, “You shall tell it to your child on that day, saying, ‘It is because of this which the Lord did for me on this day when I went forth from Egypt.’” The sages, however, part ways with the Torah once the questions are asked. In some cases, they drew on the Torah’s answers to these questions and in others the Haggadah formulates its own answers to the questions taken from the text of the Torah.

What does the Wise child say?

1. The Haggadah gives an answer to the wise child that is different from the one that is found in the Torah in response to his question. Why does the Haggadah choose to ignore the Torah’s answer?

The wise child’s question reflects a broader perspective than just the laws and customs of Passover. He asks, “What these testimonies, statutes, and judgments which the Lord your God has commanded you?” He is asking not only about the feast Passover, but about the meaning of the *Torah* as a whole. The three types of laws to which the wise child refers (“Testimonies, statutes, and judgments”) reflect the totality of types of commandments found in the *Torah*:

- a. **Eduyot** Testimonies or laws that allow us to or bear witness to the presence of God and the Holy One’s manifold kindness to us. For instance, the *Seder* allows us to testify to the power of God’s redemption from Egypt and the *Sukkah* is a reminder of the Clouds of Glory that protected the Israelites in the wilderness.
- b. **Hukim** Statutes are laws that have no apparent rationale and are observed as an expression of our obedience to God. By following these statutes, we show our complete and unquestioning obedience to God. We do them simply because God commanded us to do so.
- c. **Mishpatim** Judgments are laws that regulate our treatment of our neighbor and fellowman. These laws testify to divine providence. They teach us that God wishes to influence our smallest every day actions including our treatment of our fellow human being.

To answer the wise child, then, we would literally have to quote the entire Torah and that, which would not be very practical. The answer in the *Torah* is different from the one in the *Haggadah*. The *Torah* assumes that the questioner is familiar with the *Torah* as a whole. It reminds the questioner that we observe these laws out of a sense of obligation and as an expression of gratitude to God for all His kind acts, and also because in observing them we gain eternal life (“The Lord commanded us to observe...for our continued survival as is now the case.”) The *Haggadah* for its part focuses on answering the question from the perspective of *Passover*, since this is the context in which the question is now being placed. In point of fact, the passage in the *Torah* is not about *Passover* in particular, but a general question about observing the *Mitzvot* in general.

2. Why does the Maggid choose to concentrate on this particular point of Jewish laws that “one should not eat after the Afikomen”?

Rather than dealing of the reason for *Pesach*, the *Maggid* answers the question of the wise child by concentrating on just on particular law of *Pesach* – “One may not eat after the *Afikomen*.” This law is but one example of all three categories of *Mitzvot*. There are many reasons given for this particular law in the *Talmud* and they reflect the three categories of laws to which the wise child has referred. So not only are there three types of laws in the *Torah* but each law can really be seen serving all three purposes:

- a. **Eduyot** – The Passover sacrifice then is a way of testifying to the unity of God. We do not eat after the *Afikomen* as a way of insuring that a person only eats the Passover offering in one location. The reason for this is that the *Pesach* offering was meant to be an expression of our belief that there is one God and that all things come from him. When the Israelites ate the Passover offering in one location, they realized that the God who protected them was the same God who was striking the Egyptian firstborn. Unity of worship was an expression of the unity of God.
- b. **Mishpatim** – This law also teaches us the importance of living within a community. We are also not allowed participate with two groups in consuming the Passover offering. Groups of people came together to consume the offering and one could only be a member of a single group offering. This law teaches us that division and divisiveness makes redemption impossible.
- c. **Hukim** – The Passover offering must be consumed when we are already satiated. Even though *Matzot* must be consumed when one is hungry, the Passover sacrifice had to be consumed at the end of the evening so that it was eaten when one was no longer hungry.

By learning this one law, we are able to illustrate the rationale behind all three types of commandments in the *Torah*. The general is present in the specific and the specifics contain the general. The world is present in a single grain of sand.

The wicked child, what does he say?

1. **The wicked child is criticized for excluding himself from the community by saying “What does this service mean to YOU (not to me)?” Yet the wise child seems to do the same thing when he says, “Which the Lord our God commanded YOU.” Why do we criticize the wicked child for using exclusionary language but not the wise child?**

When the wise child asks, “What is the meaning of these laws...which the Lord commanded you,” he does not exclude himself from the community. Rather, as one who was born in after the events at Sinai, he did not experience the Revelation first hand. God did not directly command him to observe the commandments but he wants to know what God told his elders to do so that he can faithfully observe them. The Wicked child, on the other hand, witnesses the celebration of Passover (“What is this service to you?”) Rather than joining in, he says, “What does this mean to you,” excluding himself from the celebration. The wise child’s question is a response to hearing the commandment and wanting to understand it while the wicked child’s question is a response to witnessing the act and stepping away from participation.

2. **Once again, why does the Haggadah choose to answer this child’s question in a way that is different from the Torah’s answer to the question?**

The *Torah* does not answer the wicked child directly. Following his question in Exodus 12:26, the *Torah* goes on to say, “And you shall SAY, “It is a Passover sacrifice to the Lord...” It does not say, “And you shall say “TO HIM” The *Torah* has the respondent acknowledge the significance of the offering to himself and not to the questioner because the questioner who is wicked is not really looking for an answer. His question begins, “When your children say to you...” It does not say, “When your children question you,” as we find in the case of the question which is posed by the simple child and the wise child. The *Haggadah*, then, formulates its own caustic answer to this child’s rhetorical question. In effect it says, “He is not really asking you a question so you don’t have to answer him either.” The answer that the *Haggadah* gives meant to be sarcastic. It isn’t even addressed directly to the wicked child; the answer is “God did this for me, not for HIM” (instead of saying not for YOU.)

3. **Why does the verse that is quoted (Exodus 13:8) in the answer to the wicked child say, “It is because of this that God did for me when I went forth from Egypt”? God did not command the individual but the entire community at the time of the Exodus. It should have said, “That WE went forth from Egypt” since the entire people of Israel were commanded to observe the *Mitzvot* as a result of the Exodus.**

The key expression in this verse is “What the Lord did for me.” The Hebrew word for “did,” *Asah* has an implication of acquiring or taking possession of something. It also has a connotation of transformation, as in the case of Genesis, 12:5, “All the souls that they made (*Asu*) in *Haran*.” This phrase is understood as implying that Abraham and Sarah made souls by bringing them to a belief in one God. When our verse says, “Which the Lord did for me,” it means that God gave us the commandments in order to transform us into a covenanted nation when he took us out of Egypt. It is written in the first person singular because each person was personally transformed by God’s act of redemption.

4. **The *Maggid* concludes, “Had he been there, he would not have been redeemed.” Yet based on the verse just quoted, the statement should have been, “Had he been there, he would not have been taken out of Egypt.” Why does the *Maggid* choose to change the language of the verse in his response to the wicked child? Didn’t God take all the Israelites out of Egypt, even the wicked ones like Dathan and Abiram?**

God took all the people of Israel out of Egypt, both wicked and righteous alike. Yet he did not necessarily redeem all the people. Redemption, we saw earlier, has a connotation of becoming a possession of God. In this sense of the word, the wicked person may have left Egypt, but he does not live in this unique relationship with God even after leaving Egypt.

What does the simple child say?

The simple child’s question is similar to the opening passage in the Haggadah, “We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt...” It is a very general question, “What is this?” Unable to distinguish the subtle differences in Jewish law he asks in a more general way. We therefore give him the more general answer that the Torah presents “It is with a mighty hand that the Lord brought us out of Egypt...”

The One who does not know how to ask...

1. **What is the connotation of the word: *Vihigadita*, “And you shall tell,” in Exodus Chapter 13:8?**

The word *Vihigadita* has the connotation of constantly repeating something until the person finally understands and accepts it and is able to repeat it.

2. **Why does the *Maggid* offer this child the same answer that we just gave to the wicked child? The answer implies that he would have been excluded from redemption just as the wicked child was excluded from God’s redemption.**

One should repeat the lesson of the Exodus to the one who does not know how to ask until he is able to respond to the wicked child, “It is because of this that God did for me when I went forth from Egypt...” The one who does not know how to ask is the child who is most likely to be influenced by the wicked child, so we must educate him so he is able to respond effectively to his co-religionist. This is implied by the language of the verse, “You shall tell it to your child on that day, saying, ‘It is because of this that the Lord did for me when I went forth from Egypt.’” The word “Saying,” (*Laymor*) implies, “You shall tell it to him on that day so he can say...”

Because of this that the Lord did for me...(Exodus 13:8)

1. What is the connection between the consecration of the first born, the month of *Aviv*, the prohibition against idolatry, and the commandment to observe Passover?

This is a bit of a digression but one that is directly related to the theme of Passover. Exodus 13:8 follows the law of consecrating the first born (Exodus 13:1-2.) Moses then appears to change course and he reminds the people, “Remember the day on which you went forth from Egypt...in the month of *Aviv*.” The Torah then reminds the people to eat *Matzah* and to celebrate the feast of Passover. This same combination of themes and linguistic connections is also found in several other passages in the *Torah*:

- a. In Exodus 23:10, the commandment to observe the three festivals is followed by the commandment to eat *Matzah* in the month of *Abib*, “for on it you went forth from Egypt.”
- b. In Exodus 34:17-18, the commandment not to worship molten gods is followed by “You shall observe the feast of unleavened bread...at the set time in the month of *Abib*...you went forth from Egypt.”
- c. In Deuteronomy 15:19-16:1, we find the law of consecrating all the firstlings followed by a similar passage, “Observe the month of *Abib*...God freed you from Egypt.”

The themes of the firstborn, the prohibition against idolatry, and the observance of Passover are connected to one another. Israel’s first Passover in Egypt was meant to be a repudiation of Egyptian idolatry. The Egyptians worshipped the Ram, the first of the astrological symbol in the signs of the Zodiac. By slaughtering the Passover lamb (i.e. the ram), we were showing our rejection of the gods of Egypt. God is the first among all firsts. Therefore, whenever we are told to consecrate the firstborn or the firstlings, the *Torah* follows the commandment with a reminder to observe Passover which was the first religious ceremony to celebrate the rejection of the cult of the firstborn. In the *Torah* the firstborn belong to God, yet another reminder that God is the first among all firsts. Similarly, spring was the time of year associated with the astrological symbol of the Ram. By celebrating Passover at this time of year and mentioning *Abib* in connection with this practice, we are reminded of the rejection of Egyptian idolatry.

Yachol MeiRosh Chodesh

One might have thought that the obligation to remember the Exodus began with *Rosh Hodesh*...

Background

The Haggadah digresses into a discussion of when we are supposed to begin telling the story of the Exodus from Egypt. Do we begin with the new month of Nissan? Do we start before Passover begins while we are preparing the Passover sacrifice? Or does the obligation begin only with the setting of the sun on Passover eve? The Haggadah draws on the very same verse that was just quoted in connection with the child who does not know how to ask (and the wicked child for that matter.) In this inquiry into the meaning of the verse the Haggadah clarifies the time frame in which we are obligated to tell the story of the Exodus.

Rabbi Lorberbaum understands that each passage in the Haggadah is organically connected to the ones before and after it, so he tries to find the significance in this passage falling where it does. He also tries to explain the nuances of this verse in Exodus. At first glance the phrasing of the verse would appear to be redundant. He explains why we need each phrase in this verse.

1. **What is the connection between this discussion and the previous passage and why do we specifically mention the time for the celebration of Passover in connection with the child who does not know how to ask?**

The other three children are engaged in a dialogue with someone else. Their questions relate directly to the celebration of Passover. They see what we are doing at the *Seder* table and ask or challenge someone to explain it to them. This is not the case with the child who does not know how to ask. Because he doesn't interact with others there is a chance that he is not present at the *Seder* table so we have to make sure he knows when Passover is observed and when we are obligated to tell the story of the Exodus from Egypt.

2. **Why would it occur to someone to think that we should begin telling the story of the Exodus from *Rosh Hodesh*?**

Rabbi Shimon Ben Gamliel (*Pesachim* 6a) says that we should begin expounding on the laws of Passover from the beginning of the month of *Nissan*. Actually the sages suggest that we should do so even earlier (thirty days before *Pesach*.) Everyone is in agreement, however, that we must begin expounding on these laws by the beginning of *Nissan*. One might assume that the obligation to tell the story of the Passover also begins at the same time. This verse teaches us that the obligation is not incumbent until Passover itself. Before Passover we might tell the story but we are not fulfilling the *Mitzvah* of telling the story yet.

3. **Since the proof text specifically say, “On that day” why would someone conclude that you should begin the day before since that isn't the day the Israelites went forth from Egypt?**

Since we prepare and offer the Passover sacrifice on the afternoon before Passover eve, we might assume that we must begin telling the story at that time. The verse teaches us that we do not begin telling the story until the evening of the Passover has arrived, when the *Matzah* and the *Maror* are on the table before the person.

4. **Why is it necessary to say “On that day,” at all since it also says “Because of this” which is understood to mean when the *Matzah* and the *Maror* are in front of the person on the table? It should have been enough for the verse to state, “You shall tell it to your child, ‘It is because of this when I went out of Egypt.’”**

Even though the phrase *Ba'avur Zeh*, “Because of this,” teaches us that we must tell the story when the *Matzah* and the *Maror* are before us on the table, it is still necessary to say “On that day.” If the verse had said, “You shall it to you child, saying, “it is because of this that God did for me,” one might have assumed that from the beginning of the month of *Nissan* as soon as one began dealing with preparing *Matzah* and *Maror* it is time to tell the story of the Exodus.

A summary of interpretation Exodus 13:8

You shall tell your child – the one who does not know how to ask. Continually review the story with him. This is what the word *Haggadah* means – draw out the words. **on that day**, - on the day when we commemorate the Exodus from Egypt on the eve of Passover. **saying**, - teach him the story and review it again and again until he internalizes it so that he will be able to say, **‘It is because of this** - “This” is the *Matzah* and the *Maror*. God took us out for the sake of rewarding us with the commandments **which the Lord did for me when I went forth from Egypt**? - Responding to the wicked child, the one who does not know how to ask will respond with some prompting, God brought me out of Egypt and not you! Had you been there you would not have been worthy of redemption.

Mitehilah Ovdei Avodah Zarah

Once our ancestors were idolaters

מִתְחִלָּה עוֹבְדֵי עֲבוֹדָה זָרָה הָיוּ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ. וְעָכְשָׁו קִרְבָּנוּ הַמָּקוֹם
לְעִבּוֹדָתוֹ. שְׁנֵאמַר: וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוֹשֻׁעַ אֶל-כָּל-הָעָם. כֹּה אָמַר יי אֱלֹהֵי
יִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּעֵבֶר הַנָּהָר יָשְׁבוּ אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם מֵעוֹלָם, וַתֵּרַח אָבִי אַבְרָהָם
וַאֲבִי נְחוֹר. וַיַּעֲבֹדוּ אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים: וְאָקַח אֶת-אֲבִיכֶם אֶת-אַבְרָהָם
מֵעֵבֶר הַנָּהָר, וְאוֹלַךְ אוֹתוֹ בְּכָל-אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן. וְאַרְבֵּה אֶת-זֶרְעוֹ, וְאָתָּן
לוֹ אֶת-יִצְחָק: וְאָתָּן לְיִצְחָק אֶת-יַעֲקֹב וְאֶת-עֵשָׂו. וְאָתָּן לְעֵשָׂו
אֶת-הַר שְׁעִיר, לְרֵשֶׁת אוֹתוֹ. וַיַּעֲקֹב וּבָנָיו יָרְדוּ מִצְרָיִם:

בְּרוּךְ שׁוֹמֵר הַבְּטָחָתוֹ לְיִשְׂרָאֵל. בְּרוּךְ הוּא. שֶׁהִקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא
חָשַׁב אֶת-הַקָּץ, לְעִשׂוֹת כְּמָה שְׁאָמַר לְאַבְרָהָם אֲבִינוּ בְּבְרִית בֵּין
הַבְּתָרִים, שְׁנֵאמַר: וַיֹּאמֶר לְאַבְרָם יָדַע תֵּדַע, כִּי-גֵר יִהְיֶה זֶרְעֲךָ,
בְּאֶרֶץ לֹא לָהֶם, וַיַּעֲבֹדוּם וְעֵנוּ אֹתָם אַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה: וְגַם
אֶת-הַגּוֹי אֲשֶׁר יַעֲבֹדוּ דָן אֲנֹכִי. וְאַחֲרֵי כֵן יֵצְאוּ, בְּרִכְשׁ גָּדוֹל:

Once our ancestors were idolaters

but now the “One who is present” has brought us closer to His service,
as it is written: “And Joshua said to the whole people: “Thus said the Lord God of Israel, ‘In days of old
your ancestors, even Terah, the father of Abraham and Nahor, dwelled on the other side of the river and
worshipped other gods. But I took Abraham your father from beyond the river and I brought him to the
Land of Canaan I increased his offspring and I gave him Isaac. And to Isaac I gave Jacob and Esau. But
Jacob and his sons went down to Egypt.”

(Joshua 24:2-3)

Blessed is the One who kept His promise to Israel. Blessed is He. The Holy One calculated the
end as He had said to our forefather Abraham in the Covenant of the Pieces As it is written, “And God
said to Abram, ‘You shall certainly know that Your offspring shall be strangers in a land that is not theirs
And they shall be afflicted for four hundred years and the nation that enslaved them I shall judge, and
after- wards they shall go forth with great wealth.” (Genesis

מַכְסִים אֶת הַמְצוֹת וּמַגְבִּיחִים אֶת הַכּוֹס
וְהִיא שְׁעֵמֻדָּה לְאַבּוֹתֵינוּ וְלָנוּ. שֶׁלֹּא אֶחָד בְּלִבָּד, עָמַד עָלֵינוּ
לְכַלּוֹתֵנוּ. אֲלָא שְׁבָכֵל דּוֹר וְדוֹר, עוֹמְדִים עָלֵינוּ לְכַלּוֹתֵנוּ. וְהִקְדוּשׁ
בְּרוּךְ הוּא מְצִילָנוּ מִיָּדָם:

Cover the Matzah and lift up the cup of wine.

And it is that which has sustained our ancestors and us: it wasn't just one who rose up
against us to destroy us; rather in every generation they have arisen to destroy us but the
Holy One has saved us from them.

Background

There are several beginnings in the Haggadah. Initially we say, "This is the bread of affliction..." After the four questions, we begin the telling with the words, "We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt..." And now we begin the telling of the Exodus once again by mentioning our prior history as idol worshippers. There are many ways to tell a story besides "once upon a time."

"At first our ancestors worshipped idols....." This seems like a strange way to begin the story of the Exodus. Rabbi Lorberbaum tries to show why the Maggid would choose to begin the Exodus story in this way.

The Talmud gives us two pieces of instruction about how to tell the story of the Exodus. First it tells us that the story must begin "with disgrace" and end "with exaltation." And second, it discusses the proper beginning to the story. According to Samuel, the story is one of political liberation, "We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt..." And according to Rav, it is a story of our spiritual enlightenment, "At first our ancestors worshipped idols..." Both beginnings reflect the disgrace that is part of our origins but one is political in nature and the other spiritual. Rabbi Lorberbaum integrates both approaches into the telling of the story of the Exodus by suggesting that there is yet another reason for beginning with idolatry.

Originally our ancestors worshipped idols...

1. Why do we begin the telling with the fact that our ancestors were worshippers of idols? How is this related to the story of the Exodus?

If the story of the Exodus began with Jacob's descent into Egypt, we would be left with the impression that God unfairly allowed the children of Israel to be enslaved and oppressed in Egypt. The Haggadah, therefore, goes back to an earlier generation to explain the necessity of Israel's exile in Egypt. The Children of Israel were refined and purified through their presence in the land of Egypt. The suffering in Egypt was cathartic and necessary to remove the impurity of slavery that Israel still carried from earlier generations. What's more, the Talmud teaches us that we only receive our most precious gifts from God through suffering (*Yisurin*). In Berachot 5a, we are taught that God gave Israel three gifts -- Torah, the land of Israel and the world to come -- but we become worthy of them through suffering.

Abraham already understood this. That is why when Abraham asked for a sign that he would inherit the land of Israel, he was told that first the people would have to be subjugated for four hundred years (see chapter 15:8-18).

2. There are verses that explicitly recall Abraham's background in the Torah. Why does the Maggid choose the verse from Joshua as a proof text?

The verse from Joshua explains the process by which the Jewish people would be purged of the impurity of idolatry. Abraham would first give birth to Ishmael who would carry this impurity so that Isaac would be born free of the impurity. Isaac would then give birth to Esau and Jacob so that one could carry away another measure of the impurity (to Mount Seir) while Jacob would be born with even less of the mark of idolatry. Finally Jacob and his family, still not purged of the dross of idolatry, would go down to Egypt where they would be purged of the final idolatry in their soul. Egypt is referred to in the bible as a *kur barzel*, "an iron furnace." Silver is placed in a furnace to remove the dross just as Israel was placed in the furnace of Egypt to remove the impurity from its soul.

3. The initial statement is that our ancestors worshipped idols but the Holy One drew us closer to him to serve him. Yet the proof text would appear to support the first half of this statement and not the second half of the statement. Why does the Haggadah choose this proof text, which does not make the point of the statement?

Israel's descent into Egypt was not only a necessary step in the process of its redemption but a sign of God's love. Suffering is not necessarily a bad thing; it can serve a redemptive purpose. By choosing this verse, then, the Haggadah was illustrating God's intense love for Israel. God was willing to allow us to suffer so that we would become worthy of the Torah, the land of Israel and the world to come.

- 4. Chapter 24 of Joshua is a strange chapter. Joshua appears to be giving the people of Israel a choice about whether or not they will worship God. He almost appears to incite them to abandon their belief by reminding them of their idolatrous origins. Despite this the people embrace God and promise to faithfully serve Him. What is the point of this chapter?**

This chapter is not inciting the Israelites, but explaining to them God's loving-kindness. He shows the people why it is necessary for them to undergo such a painful process of suffering in order to take possession of the land of Israel, and he warns them against abandoning God. God does not simply give the people this covenant. He offers it to them, but it is up to the nation to embrace it. And that is what Joshua is doing in this chapter. Joshua renews the covenant so that it is not merely a gift but something that they have earned.

Baruch Shomer Havtachtu

Blessed is the One who kept His promise to Israel.

Background

This passage speaks about promises. God promises Abraham that his descendants will be redeemed from Egypt after four hundred years. This passage appears to be in contrast to the previous one, at least as it was interpreted by Rabbi Lorberbaum. Was the Exodus the fulfillment of a promise which God made to Abraham and which had to be fulfilled unconditionally or was Israel's redemption a product of their suffering and purging idolatry from their soul?

Notice that this passage is similar to the previous passage that appeared before the four children. It is a liturgical statement "Blessed is the One who...Blessed is He."

Blessed is the One who kept his promise to Israel

- 1. What does the Haggadah mean by the expression that God "determined the end (of our bondage)"?**

There are two ways of keeping a promise. For the average person, keeping a promise is serious business. If a person makes a promise to another person, he will often worry about fulfilling his words by looking ahead and figuring out how much time he has and what he must do to live up to his intentions. For someone in a position of power such as a ruler, on the other hand, fulfilling one's promise is not so difficult. In a sense making the promise is its fulfillment since the ruler is in a position to do whatever he wishes. He does not have to spend time worrying about fulfilling his words; he can simply have it taken care of. Here God not only makes the promise but worries about its fulfillment. He has determined the end of the bondage and he actively participates in its completion.

- 2. This passage contains two statements: “God keeps his promise to Israel” and “God determined the end (of our bondage).” What is the difference between these two expressions, and how are they different from one another?**

The Haggadah is making a powerful statement about God here. Since God’s promise of redemption should have been more than sufficient, why does the Haggadah also tell us that God “determined the end” of the bondage? This is an expression of God’s deep love and concern for the children of Israel. Even though God doesn’t have to do so, He worries about the fulfillment of His promise and actively participates in its fruition. In a sense, He puts it in His day planner; He writes it in His palm pilot. In this way, He demonstrates to the other nations just how precious the people of Israel are to Him.

We thank God, then, not only for making a promise to our ancestors but for actively fulfilling it as well. God’s active involvement in the fulfillment of His promise gives us a sense of hope, and draws God’s ‘abundance’ down and protects Israel. It gives the people a sense of hope and strength that can never be destroyed by others no matter how hateful they may be.

V’hee sh’amda And it is that which has sustained us

Background:

This passage has confounded many generations of commentators on the Haggadah. To What does the opening word of the passage, V’hee, “And it is that,” refer? Rabbi Lorberbaum ties this statement together with the previous one but he also offers an alternative explanation based on the work of Rabbi Eliezer Ashkenazi. Rabbi Lorberbaum repeatedly refers to this work and even structures his commentary based on this early work from the sixteenth century. His questions are similar to the ones that Rabbi Ashkenazi asks though his answers are not always the same.

And it is that which has sustained our ancestors and us

- 1. How does God “keep His promise”? What is the Haggadah referring to when it says “And it is that”?**

This is an explanation of the expression in the previous passage, “Blessed is He.” We bless God not only because He made a promise to us, but because He actively takes an interest in its fulfillment. This is what has sustained us from generation to generation. Even when others rose to destroy us, they could not destroy our sense of hope, which was a direct product of God’s interest in us. And even in exile, when we were seemingly cut off from God, that sense of hope sustained us in the face of overwhelming odds. The fact that God determined the end gave us reason to go on and survive. God’s promise to Abraham that in four hundred years He would redeem the Israelites from Egypt not only sustained his descendents but continues to sustain us as well.

Rabbi Eliezer Ashkenazi, the Ma’asei Hashem, understands this passage differently. The expression “And it is that which has sustained us,” refers to the statement that follows: “For in each generation they have risen against us but the Holy One has saved us from them.” What is it that has sustained us? The fact that God has allowed us to survive against overwhelming odds not by destroying those who hated us but simply by allowing us to remain alive. If God had used us to punish the other nations than it would have appeared that we were simply God’s means of punishment for others. The fact that we survived regardless of the other nations was a sign of God’s love rather than God’s anger. Israel’s survival is a sign of God’s love.

Tz'ay U'lemad
Deuteronomy 26:5

צא ולמד, מה בקש לבן הארמי לעשות ליעקב אבינו. שפרעה לא גזר אלא על הזכרים, ולבן בקש לעקר את-הכל, שנאמר: **ארמי אבד אבי, וירד מצרימה, ויגר שם במתי מעט. ויהי שם לגוי גדול, עצום ורב:**

וירד מצרימה, אנוס על פי הדבור. ויגר שם. מלמד שלא ירד יעקב אבינו להשתקע במצרים, אלא לגור שם, שנאמר: ויאמרו אל-פרעה, לגור בארץ באנו, כי אין מרעה לצאן אשר לעבדיך, כי כבד הרעב בארץ כנען. ועתה, ישבו-נא עבדיך בארץ גשן:

במתי מעט. כמה שנאמר: בשבעים נפש, ירדו אבותיך מצרימה. ועתה, שמך יי אלהיך, ככוכבי השמים לרב.

ויהי שם לגוי. מלמד שהיו ישראל מצנינים שם:

גדול עצום, כמה שנאמר: ובני ישראל, פרו וישרצו, וירבו ויעצמו, במאד מאד, ותמלא הארץ אתם:

ורב. כמה שנאמר: רבבה כצמח השדה נתתיך, ותרבי, ותגדלי, ותבאי בעדי עדיים: שדים נכנו, וישערך צמח, ואת ערם ועריה: ואעבר עליך ואראך מתבוססת בדמיך ואמר לך בדמיך חיי ואמר לך בדמיך חיי.

Come learn what Laban the Aramean sought to do to our father Jacob!

Pharaoh only made a decree against the male children while Laban sought to uproot all of them, as it is written:

**“An Aramean sought to destroy my father;
He went down to Egypt and dwelled there few in number and there he
became a great, strong and populous nation.” (Deut. 26:5)**

He went down to Egypt – compelled by a divine decree

And he sojourned there - Jacob did not go down to settle in Egypt but merely to sojourn there. As it is said, And they said to Pharaoh, ‘To sojourn in Egypt we have come because there is no pasture for the flocks which your servants have, for the famine is severe in the land of Canaan. Now allow your servants to dwell in the land of Egypt

With meager numbers – as it says: “With seventy people, your ancestors went down to Egypt and now the Lord your God has made you as numerous as the stars in the heaven.” Deuteronomy 10:22

And there he became a nation – this teaches that the Israelites were distinctive there

Great – as it says: “And the children of Israel were fruitful, increased greatly, multiplied and became very, very mighty; and the land was filled with them.” (Exodus 1:7)

And populous – as it says, “I made you more numerous as the plants of the field; you grew and developed and you came to possess great attractions: your breasts were firm and your hair was grown but you were poorly clad and naked. Now when I passed by and saw you covered in blood, I said: ‘by your blood live, yea, by your blood you shall live.’ (Ezekiel 14: 7, 6)

Come Learn!

Background

There are so many questions on this opening verse of the Maggid. Who was the Aramean that the Torah speaks of and what did he seek to do to our forefather Jacob? Rabbi Lorberbaum offers a daring explanation of this passage that parts ways with most commentators and with the plain sense meaning of the passage in the Haggadah. The problem is that the Haggadah has already parted ways with the plain sense meaning of the verse Arami Oved Avi. Most contemporary translations render these words “My father was a wandering Aramean,” instead of “An Aramean sought to destroy my father.” But as you will see, Rabbi Lorberbaum searches for a way to hold on to the traditional understanding of this verse without doing violence to the plain sense meaning of the words. Does he succeed? I will leave that for you to decide.

At the same time Rabbi Lorberbaum solves another problem: why are we talking about Laban in the first place? What does he have to do with the story of the Exodus from Egypt? Rabbi Lorberbaum finds an ingenious connection between Pharaoh and Laban that allows the reader to explore the feminine and masculine aspects of the Exodus. Laban is a danger to Israel spiritually and not physically.

Go and learn:

- 1. Why does the Haggadah choose to blame the descent to Egypt on Laban and on this passage which begins, “My father was a wandering Aramean...”? What does the expression *Arami Oved Avi* mean?**

Laban sought to destroy Abraham’s descendents by severing Jacob’s connection to his covenant as well as to his family. Like many Biblical personalities, he tried to accomplish this by using ‘imaginative actions’ (*Poel Dimayon*) as a way of predicting his family’s destiny. ‘Imaginative actions’ are acts that are meant to reflect a deeper reality through symbolism and sympathetic magic. The performer carries out an act which mimics or foreshadows what he hopes the destiny of another may be. Jewish and non-Jewish

prophets alike performed such acts. For instance, Jeremiah throws a stone into the river as a way of illustrating that Babylon will sink and be destroyed. The imaginative and symbolic action is predictive of a future reality. Pharaoh also used such ‘imaginative actions’ as a way of destroying Israel. Since Israel is connected to the male side of divinity, by casting the male children into the Nile, he believed that he would weaken Israel’s connection to the divine.

Laban went one step farther than Pharaoh. He threatened to destroy both the men and women in the family of Jacob by inciting them to leave their faith in the true God and thereby destroying any connection to the divine – not just the male aspect of the divine as Pharaoh would do, but the female aspect as well.

It wasn’t so much that Laban wished to physically destroy Jacob and his family as he wished to destroy their spiritual connection to God. The verse then should be read, “My father, Laban, was a “lost Aramean” who lacked a basic belief in the true God, and he wished to seduce Jacob and his family into adopting idolatry.

2. Why does the Haggadah use Laban as an example of the previous statement in the Haggadah that people have risen against us in every generation to destroy us?

The reference to Laban in the Haggadah is not about the physical destruction of the Jewish people, but about the possibility of their spiritual destruction. The Haggadah returns to the theme it mentioned earlier: why was it necessary for the children of Israel to go down to Egypt in the first place? We learned that the exile to Egypt was necessary because Abraham came from a family of idolaters. It was necessary for him to undergo a process of purification in the furnace of Egypt before his people could become worthy of receiving the Torah at Mount Sinai. This passage continues this theme. Not only did Abraham come from a family of idolaters, but the Matriarchs, Rachel and Leah, came from such a family as well. In theory Jacob should have been exempt from undergoing such a process of refinement and purification since Abraham had already gone down to Egypt, but because he spent so much time in close proximity to his father-in-law the idolater, Laban, even he was forced to go down to Egypt with his children who still needed to be purified from the impurity of idolatry!

The two passages, “At first our ancestors worshipped idols,” and “What did Laban seek to do to our father Jacob” both focus on the theme of Israel’s questionable origins of the Jewish people and the need to be purified of idolatry. It would appear that the children of Israel came from idolaters both paternally and maternally, and this was why it was necessary for them to go down to Egypt. The statement about Laban is not meant to be a proof text for the statement that “In every generation there are those who rose up against us to destroy us.” Rather it refers back to the earlier discussion in the Haggadah prior to this.

3. Why do we need a statement about anti-Semitism and the suffering of the Jewish people at all? Haven’t we witnessed this fact in our own lives? A better example of such hatred against the Jewish people from the Bible would have been Haman who also sought to destroy the entire Jewish people in Shushan.

The challenge here is correct. This statement about Laban is not meant to be an example of how people rise up to destroy us in every generation. Rather, as we have seen it is but an example of Israel’s humble origins from idolatry and an explanation of why the descent to Egypt was necessary in the first place.

4. This verse does not clearly state that Laban wished to destroy the people of Israel. Why doesn’t the Haggadah use the verse from Genesis that clearly states this: “Is it not in the power of my hand to hurt you...?” (Genesis 31:29)

It wasn't so much that Laban wished to destroy Jacob and his family (after all they were his family, too). Rather he wished to incite them so they would abandon God and embrace idolatry. This is the implications of the word *Oved* in the verse in Deuteronomy. The word *Oved* is not a verb, but an adjective. Laban was an *Arami Oved*. *Oved* means lost; Laban was lost from this world and the world to come because he lacked faith in God. Similarly, we find the word *Oved* used in this sense in the verse, "The ones who are lost in the land of Assyria...." (Isaiah 27:13) – The ones who are lost are those who had given up their faith.

5. In reality didn't Pharaoh also wish to destroy the entire people of Israel? By killing the male children, wasn't it his intention to see to it that the Israelites would fail to propagate?

Yes, he did. However Laban's imaginative action was more devastating than that of Pharaoh since Pharaoh focused on the male aspect of our connection to divinity while Laban's attempt was to destroy both the male and female connection to divinity. According to this interpretation, both men focused on severing the spiritual connection between the descendants of Abraham to God and not their physical well-being or survival.

6. Deuteronomy Chapter 26 is actually the passage that was recited when the people of Israel brought the first fruits to the Temple on the festival of Shavuot. Why was it necessary to use this notion of the destroying Aramean and the descent to Egypt in relation to the practice of the bringing of the first fruits? What is the connection between this practice and this passage?

So why did we make a declaration about Laban on those occasions when we brought the first fruits in ancient times? The process of purification was essential to our inheriting the land of Israel, which is a holy land. By speaking of Laban and then our descent into Egypt, the people would understand why slavery was necessary (to remove Laban from our system) and where we come from originally.

Arami Oved Avi Vayered Mitzraima

My father was a lost Aramean (who tried to incite my ancestors)
Jacob went down to Egypt few and sojourned there in numbers....

Background

We now begin the Midrashic interlude that is at the very heart of the Haggadah. This is the part that many people often skip because it is confusing and difficult to unpack. Yet the real fun of the Haggadah can be found in these verses as we try to figure out what the sages had in mind. Several verses from Deuteronomy, Chapter 26, which originally served as the declaration made by the Jews when they brought first fruits to the Temple are brought and explicated in Midrashic fashion. This means that the Maggid carefully reads each of the verses and adds some insight into their meaning by explaining their words or using other verses in the Bible to explain them. These verses offer a brief first-hand description of the enslavement and redemption of the Jewish people: "My father was a wandering Aramean; he went down to Egypt and sojourned there...but the Egyptians dealt harshly with us and oppressed us...we cried out to the Lord...the Lord freed us with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm...He brought us to this place..." The Haggadah co-opts this entire passage and then expands on its meaning with other verses from the Bible as well as some explanations. Rabbi Lorberbaum wants us to understand each of these comments by raising the question the verse presents and by showing us the connection between the source verse and the Midrashic explanation verse.

He went down to Egypt – compelled by a divine decree

- 1. How does the Haggadah conclude that *Vayered*, “He went down” implies that he was compelled to do so?**

The phrase “He went down to Egypt,” logically must be connected with the previous phrase in the same verse, “A lost Aramean was my father.” We can conclude that Jacob did not go down to Egypt freely but, as we have seen, because he was forced to as part of his punishment for having spent so much time in the company of Laban..

And he sojourned there - Jacob did not go down to settle in Egypt but merely to sojourn there...

There are two proofs for this explanation of the verse in Deuteronomy. First, the word *Vayar* comes from the root word *Gur*, which means to sojourn rather than to permanently settle. The Haggadah also brings an additional verse from Genesis 47:4 to prove this. Shortly after arriving in Egypt, Joseph brings his brothers to Pharaoh. They clearly say that their intention is not to remain in Egypt but to sojourn there until the end of the famine: “And they said to Pharaoh, ‘We have come to sojourn (*Lagur*) in this land for there is no pasture for your servants’ flocks, the famine being severe in the land of Canaan.’”

With meager numbers – as it says: “With seventy people your ancestors went down to Egypt and now the Lord your God has made you as numerous as the stars in the heaven.” Deuteronomy 10:22

- 1. The entire Midrash on Deuteronomy 26 is a collection of verses that are chosen from elsewhere in the Bible to illustrate something that is stated on one of the verses in Deuteronomy, Chapter 26. They do not seem to add any deeper insight into the meaning of the *Bikkurim* (first fruit) declaration found in this chapter. What is the point of this series of juxtaposed verses?**

The Verses contained in this section of the Haggadah are something of a riddle. We have a series of verses from Deuteronomy 26:5 – 8 that are illuminated by other verses from various parts of the Bible. While the illustrating verses would appear not to add anything to our understanding of the verses in Deuteronomy 26, in fact each illustrating verse is an answer to a question raised by the original verse. It is up to the reader to figure out what the question is and how the illustrating verse answers the question.

Deuteronomy 26:5 troubles the Maggid. It says: “And he (Jacob) went down and dwelled there with meager numbers; but there he became a great and very populous nation. What is it that is troubling the Maggid about this verse? The verse should have said: “And he (Jacob) went down with meager numbers and dwelled there and there he became a great and populous nation...” The verse implies that Jacob dwelled in Egypt with few in number. Yet a Midrash tells us that the children of Jacob had already increased significantly and become a great and populous nation before his death. So why does our verse say that he dwelled there with meager numbers?

- 2. In this case the proof text quotes not only the first part of the verse in Deuteronomy 10: “With seventy people” which seems to prove the verse from Deuteronomy 26, but it quotes the last part as well “God has made you as numerous...” Why does the Haggadah include the entire verse when the first part should have been enough?**

The answer to this question can be found in the choice of verses used to answer this question. Deuteronomy 10 says that Israel went down with only seventy but they have become a nation as numerous as the stars in the sky. Yet this is also a troubling verse. First, we know that there were far more Israelites in Egypt than there were in the wilderness. A Midrash teaches us that only one fifth of the Israelites left Egypt at the time of the Exodus. So, in a sense, this verse is wrong. The people of Israel were not as numerous as they had been in Egypt. So why does Moses describe the nation this way at the end of the desert sojourn and not earlier?

The answer can be found in a comment by Rashi on the opening verse of the book of Exodus. He wonders why the Torah makes a point of counting the children once again in this verse since the Torah had already done so earlier in the book of Genesis. Rashi compares Israel to the stars, which God “takes out and brings in by number and by their name.” Similarly, God discounted the years of exile in Egypt and only counted the people as they entered Egypt and after they had left and received the Torah. Even though they were more numerous during their years in Egypt they were not worthy of being counted. The verse in Deuteronomy 26, then, says that they dwelled there few in number because God only counts the seventy righteous people who entered Egypt and not those who were born there. And He did not count them again until after they received the Torah. The verse from Deuteronomy 10 with its reference to the stars hints at why our verse says they dwelled there few in number!

3. Why choose a verse from Deuteronomy as a proof text when a verse from Genesis would have been more direct and appropriate: “Thus the total number of Jacob’s household who came to Egypt was seventy persons.” (Genesis 46:27)

What the verse in Deuteronomy 10 teaches us is that only the worthy truly count. This Midrash is not just about numbers, but about righteousness. The verse in Genesis simply tells us how many people went down to Egypt, while Deuteronomy 10 makes us aware of the connection between the early generation that entered Egypt and those who now prepare to enter the land of Canaan! Maybe another way of putting this is that God looks for quality and not quantity.

And there Israel became a nation – this teaches that the Israelites were distinctive there

Great – as it says: “And the children of Israel were fruitful, increased greatly, multiplied and became very, very mighty; and the land was filled with them.” (Exodus 1:7)

The words, *Gadol* (great), *Atzum*, (mighty), and *Rav* (populous) all have the same meaning. What does this seeming repetition of synonyms add to our understanding of the verse?

The first word *Gadol* refers to the quality of the nation; they became a great nation because they were a distinctive people with their own customs and practices that connected them to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The word *Atzum* refers to the quantitative nature of the nation; they became mighty because they were so numerous.

And populous – as it says, “I made you more numerous as the plants of the field; you grew and developed ... but you were poorly clad and naked. (Ezekiel 14: 7, 6)

Since we have already had a proof text for the physical increase of the Israelites what does Ezekiel 14 add to our understanding of the verse in Deuteronomy? What does the word *Rav* add to this verse that the words *Gadol* and *Atzum* have not already taught us?

This statement can be understood by a comment on a verse in the book of Hosea 2:1: “Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be like the sand of the sea; none can count nor number.” The two halves of this verse seem to contradict one another. While the sand of the sea is numerous, it is finite. So how can we say it cannot be counted or numbered?

The Talmud (Yoma) states that the two halves of this verse refer to two types of people: those who obey God’s will and those who fail to do so. According to this interpretation, the Bible distinguishes those Jews who observe God’s commandments from those who fail to do so by saying that those who fail to live by the commandments shall be like “the sand of the sea,” while those who do so shall be so numerous that it will be “impossible to count or number them.” Those who observe the commandments will be blessed with continuing generations forever and, therefore, in this sense they are infinite and beyond measure. This applies not only to the nation, but to the individual.

The verse in Isaiah, then, compares the people of Israel to the plants of the field, which continue to increase and be reborn just as the righteous of Israel shall do. The word *Rav* (populous) adds something more than just physical increase; it is a veiled reference to their commitment to the God’s will.

The three adjectives in this verse: *Gadol, Atzum V’rav* can be translated according to this commentary as follows: The people became distinctive, numerous and faithful nation.

Another interpretation of the word *Rav* according to Ezekiel: the people shall become like the plants of the field, which are pruned and tended to, unlike the plants of the forest, which simply grow on their own. The plants of the field are more likely to increase because they are subject to our care and tending. That is why the righteous are compared to them; they live within the discipline of care. The plants of the forest, on the other hand, are wild and are not guaranteed increase and growth that comes from the nurturing of humankind.

Deuteronomy 26:6

וַיַּרְעוּ אֶתְנוּ הַמִּצְרִים וַיַּעֲנוּנוּ. וַיִּתְּנוּ עָלֵינוּ עֲבֹדָה קָשָׁה:

וַיַּרְעוּ אֶתְנוּ הַמִּצְרִים. כָּמָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: הִבֵּה נִתְחַכְמָה לוֹ. פְּרִי-רֵבֵבָה, וְהִיָּה כִּי-תִקְרָאנָה מִלְחָמָה, וְנוֹסֵף גַּם הוּא עַל-שְׂנְאֵינוּ, וְנִלְחַם-בָּנוּ וְעָלָה מִן-הָאָרֶץ:

וַיַּעֲנוּנוּ. כָּמָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וַיִּשְׁלִמוּ עָלָיו שָׂרֵי מִסִּים, לְמַעַן עֲנֹתוּ בְּסִבְלָתָם: וַיִּבֹן עָרֵי מִסְכָּנוֹת לְפָרְעָה, אֶת-פֶּתֶם וְאֶת-רַעְמֵסֶס:

וַיִּתְּנוּ עָלֵינוּ עֲבֹדָה קָשָׁה. כָּמָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וַיַּעֲבֹדוּ מִצְרַיִם אֶת-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּפָרָד:

**The Egyptians did evil to us and afflicted us;
and they imposed hard labor upon us. Deuteronomy 26:6**

The Egyptians did evil to us – as it is said, “Let us deal wisely with them lest they increase and if we happen to be at war they will join our enemies and fight against us and rise up from the land.” Exodus 1:10

And afflicted us – as it is said, “They set taskmasters over them in order to oppress them with their burdens; they built Pithom and Ramses.” Exodus 1:11

And they placed hard labor upon us – as it is written, “the Egyptians forced them to work ruthlessly.” Exodus 1:13

Background

The essence of Midrash is found in expressions that appear to be unnecessary or repetitive. In Deuteronomy 26:6, we have three phrases that all appear to express the same idea: Israel’s treatment by the Egyptians. They treat them poorly; they afflict them; and they impose hard labor upon them. So why do we need all three statements? Rabbi Lorberbaum shows us that each expression offers a different dimension in the oppression of the Israelites in Egypt.

The Egyptians did evil to us. The expression, “To do evil” has the connotation of finding clever ways to oppress and to deal harshly with the Israelites. A better, but less literal, translation of this verse would be “they thought evil” of us. The future form of the verb, such as the one used here, implies intention and forethought. It is similar to the verb in *Az Yashir* Moshe literally “Then Moses will sing¹⁴” in Exodus 15, which Rashi interprets as, “Then it occurred to Moses to sing.” This is the first step in their oppression; the Egyptians begin to scheme and plan ways to oppress the children of Israel. The verse that is used as a proof text here implies that Pharaoh began scheming about ways to oppress the Israelites: “Let us deal wisely with them...”

Another interpretation offered by many commentaries is that the Egyptians impute evil and bad things to the Israelites. Like many anti-Semites, the Egyptians began by accusing the Israelites in order to justify their oppression. The second part of the proof text supports this point of view: Pharaoh suggests that the Israelites will rise up and attack the people of Egypt. So he accuses them of being unfaithful to their land and nation.

And they afflicted us. The word ‘afflict’ could be understood as affliction for some larger national purpose. For instance, Pharaoh might have enslaved the people of Israel in order to take advantage of their free labor to accomplish some national project. The proof text offers a different insight: the purpose of this hard labor was not to accomplish anything in particular but, rather, to break the spirit of the Israelites. The verse says, “He placed taskmasters over them in order to oppress them.” In other words, he placed the taskmasters over them solely for the purpose of oppression and not necessarily because he wanted to take advantage of free labor. This idea is reflected in a Midrash that claims that the Egyptians would have the Israelites construct buildings and then knock them down so that they would have to build them all over again.

¹⁴ There is really no good way to translate the phrase here. The word, *Yashir* is the plural form of the verb *Shir*, sing, but like many future verb forms it is really past tense in Biblical Hebrew. We see this often in biblical Hebrew; the *Vav Hahefukh* converts future tense verbs to past tense. Maybe this is an expression of the fact that past present and future are not really separate from one another...

And they placed hard labor upon us. The proof text here teaches us something about the quality of the hard labor and not just the quantity. The verse says that the Egyptians forced them to work ruthlessly, *Bifarekh*. A commentary in the Talmud interprets this word with one type of *Gematria*¹⁵ called *At Bash* so that the numerical value of the word “*Farekh* is thirty-nine. This is a reference to the thirty-nine forms of labor that we are forbidden to perform on the Sabbath. The Talmud bases the types of labor they imposed on the Israelites on the types of labor that would eventually become necessary for the building of the Tabernacle, and which was not permitted to perform on the Sabbath.¹⁶ The Egyptians enslaved the Israelites with these types of labor, and God made these the type of work that would be used in the building of His Tabernacle and later His Temple. When we observe Shabbat by following these prohibitions, we are, in effect, repudiating the very forms of labor the Egyptians tried to impose upon us.

Deuteronomy 26:7

וּנְצַעַק אֶל־יְיָ אֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, וַיִּשְׁמַע יְיָ אֶת־קִלְנוּ, וַיֵּרָא אֶת־עֲנִינּוּ,
וְאֶת־עֲמָלָנוּ, וְאֶת לְחֻצְנוּ:

וּנְצַעַק אֶל־יְיָ אֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, כְּמָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר:
וַיְהִי בַיָּמִים הָרַבִּים הֵהֵם, וַיָּמָת מִלֶּדָּה מִצְרַיִם, וַיִּאֲנָחוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל
מִן־הָעֲבֹדָה וַיִּזְעָקוּ. וַתַּעַל שׁוֹעַתָם אֶל־הָאֱלֹהִים מִן־הָעֲבֹדָה:

וַיִּשְׁמַע יְיָ אֶת־קִלְנוּ. כְּמָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וַיִּשְׁמַע אֱלֹהִים אֶת־נַאֲקָתָם,
וַיִּזְכֹּר אֱלֹהִים אֶת־בְּרִיתוֹ, אֶת־אֲבֹתָם, אֶת־יִצְחָק, וְאֶת יַעֲקֹב:

וַיֵּרָא אֶת־עֲנִינּוּ: זֶה פְּרִישׁוֹת דָּרָךְ אֶרֶץ. כְּמָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים
אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל. וַיַּדַּע אֱלֹהִים:

וְאֶת־עֲמָלָנוּ. אֵלֵינוּ הַבָּנִים. כְּמָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: כָּל־הַבֶּן הַיְלֹוֹד הַיְאֲרָה
תִּשְׁלִיכֶהוּ, וְכָל־הַבַּת תִּתְחַוֶּן:

וְאֶת לְחֻצְנוּ. זֶה הַדְּחָק. כְּמָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וְגַם־רָאִיתִי אֶת־הַלֶּחֶץ, אֲשֶׁר
מִצְרַיִם לְחָצִים אֹתָם:

**“We cried to the Lord, God of our ancestors,
And the Lord heard our voice, and saw
our affliction, our burden and our oppression.”** Deuteronomy 26:7

¹⁵ Gematria is a system of interpretation in which the numerical value of each word plays a role in its significance. There are many forms of Gematria, one of which is called “At Bash.” “At Bash” is based on the idea that letters at opposite ends of the Aleph Bet are interchangeable. So “Aleph” is connected to “Tuff” (At) and “Bet” is connected to “Shin” (Bash). In this system the letter “Pey” is equal to six (the letter “Vav”), the letter “Reysh” is equal to three (the letter “Gimel”) and the letter “Kuf” is equal to thirty (the letter “Lamed”). Such a system is admittedly far fetched, and I suspect that Rabbi Lorberbaum is winking at us here and having a bit of fun! It certainly would keep the children alert at the Seder.

¹⁶ Now that was quite an accomplishment! How could the Egyptians know this!

We cried out to the Lord, God of our ancestors -- as it said,
 “Some time after that the King of Egypt died;
 The children of Israel groaned because of the bondage and they cried out. Their cry because of the
 bondage rose up to God.” Exodus 2:23

And the Lord heard our voice - as it said,
 “And God heard their sigh and remembered and
 God remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.” Exodus 2:24

And He saw our affliction – This refers to forced separation of couples.
 As it said, “God saw the children of Israel and God knew.” Exodus 2:24

And our burden – This refers to the boys, as it is said,
 “Every newborn male you shall cast into the river,
 but every daughter shall live.” Exodus 1:22

And our oppression – This refers to the persecution, as it is said,
 “And I also saw the oppression with which
 the Egyptians oppressed them.” (Exodus 3:9)

Background

According to Rabbi Lorberbaum there is a common theme to the comments in the Haggadah Deuteronomy 26:7. It would seem that these comments are exploring why God chose to bring the redemption sooner than he had predicted to Abraham in Genesis 15:13: “Know well that your offspring shall be strangers in a land not theirs and they shall be enslaved and oppressed for four hundred years...” God had foretold to Abraham that his offspring would be both enslaved and oppressed; they were simply living out the prediction that had already been given to them (in order to rid themselves of the dross and impurity of their former idolatrous past). So why then did God bring them out of Egypt sooner than expected? It must have been that the Egyptians’ oppression went above and beyond what God allowed for. The Israelites were therefore purified sooner and the Egyptians were deserving of punishment.

We cried out to the Lord – Many people, when confronted with suffering and tribulations, cry out to God (that’s why we say that there are no atheists in a foxhole). So how about the Israelites? How did the children of Israel cry out to God? Was their cry motivated by faith or by pain and suffering? Was their cry one of sincere and heartfelt prayer and a desire to return to God, or was it simply a cry that came out of the pain and suffering they experienced in Egypt?

The proof text from Exodus implies that they cried out of suffering (“They groaned because of the bondage”); none the less, their sigh still rose up to God despite the fact that it was not motivated by sincere and heartfelt faith (“Their cry *because of the bondage* rose up to God”). Interestingly this interpretation depicts the Israelites in a less than positive fashion. God answers the prayers of those who suffer whether or not they are faithful servants.

And He saw our affliction – There are two questions that this passage raises. How does the proof text from Exodus 2:24 teach us that the verse in Deuteronomy is about the forced separation of couples? And how do we even know that the Egyptians actually oppressed the Israelites in this fashion? There is no clear and unequivocal verse that states this in the Bible.

There are several steps in arriving at the conclusion that these verses are speaking about the ‘forced separation of the sexes’ by the Egyptians.

First, we note that both verses contain the word *Vayar*, “And he saw.” In classic rabbinic hermeneutics, this is a *Gezera Shava*, in which we can draw an inference of a connection between verses based on similar words being used in both verses.

Second, the Hebrew word for “And he saw” implies something more than simply seeing. After all, it should have been enough to say that God remembered His covenant with the forefathers and therefore redeemed them. This was already foretold. However, the Bible implies here that God saw the severity of their oppression and decided to redeem the Israelites sooner than he had told Abraham he would. (Abraham was told the Israelites would be in Egypt 400 years.)

Third, we have already been told, in Deuteronomy 26:5, that the people were afflicted, so the expression in this verse “God saw our affliction,” also implies something more than normal affliction. We can conclude that the affliction here was of some type that was never decreed against the Israelites in the first place. We must figure out what it adds to our understanding of the verse.

Fourth, we can conclude from elsewhere in the Bible that the word for affliction implies sexual oppression of some sort, such as in Genesis 39:49 in which Laban threatens Jacob: “If you afflict my daughters...” Rashi interprets this to mean that if he denies them the rightful conjugal rights, he will have broken their agreement. The word *Inui* has a sexual connotation here and this can be connected to other uses of this verse in the Bible.

Fifth, the word *Anyenu*, “our affliction” in Deuteronomy is strange. Normally the word should have been *Eenuyenu* for “our affliction.” This word implies a different type of oppression by the Egyptians. Since the text of the Bible already said that the Egyptians afflicted them, it should have been enough to say “And God saw” without the repetition of this word.

And our burden – It is self-evident that the word that the word *Amalaynu* implies the birth of children. The verse that is brought here is meant to teach us what the implication of this expression is to the decree of Pharaoh. The word *Amal* can also be translated as “labor” or “travail” in the sense of giving birth as a form of labor or travail.

And our oppression – The question here is similar to the comment above. At first glance, how does the proof text from Exodus add something to our understanding of Deuteronomy? And how do we learn persecution (*Dochak*) from the verse in Exodus that never uses this specific word? The verse in Exodus begins “And I also saw...” The word “also” implies something more than simple oppression, which we have already learned was part of what God told Abraham the Israelites would experience in Egypt. It implies that God saw something more happening in Egypt that would motivate him to cause the redemption to happen sooner than He originally promised. The addition of persecution led God to bring the redemption sooner than four hundred years.

Deuteronomy Chapter 26:8

**וּיּוֹצֵאֲנוּ יְיָ מִמִּצְרַיִם, בְּיַד חֲזָקָה, וּבְזֹרֵעַ נְטוּיָה,
וּבְמִרְאָה גְדוֹל וּבְאֵתוֹת וּבְמוֹפְתִים:**

וּיּוֹצֵאֲנוּ יְיָ מִמִּצְרַיִם. לֹא עַל־יְדֵי מְלָאָךְ, וְלֹא עַל־יְדֵי שַׁרְף. וְלֹא עַל־יְדֵי שְׁלִיחַ. אֲלֵא הַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא בְּכַבּוּדוֹ וּבְעֶצְמוֹ. שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וְעִבְרַתִּי בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם בְּלִילָה הַזֶּה, וְהִפִּיתִי כָּל־בְּכוֹר בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם, מֵאָדָם וְעַד בְּהֵמָה, וּבְכָל־אֱלֹהֵי מִצְרַיִם אֲעֹשֶׂה שְׁפָטִים אֲנִי יְיָ:

וְעִבְרַתִּי בְּאֶרֶץ־מִצְרַיִם בְּלִילָה הַזֶּה, אֲנִי וְלֹא מְלָאָךְ. וְהִפִּיתִי כָּל בְּכוֹר בְּאֶרֶץ־מִצְרַיִם. אֲנִי וְלֹא שַׁרְף. וּבְכָל־אֱלֹהֵי מִצְרַיִם אֲעֹשֶׂה שְׁפָטִים, אֲנִי וְלֹא הַשְּׁלִיחַ. אֲנִי יְיָ. אֲנִי הוּא וְלֹא אֲחֵר:

בְּיַד חֲזָקָה. זֶה הַדָּבָר. כְּמָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: הִנֵּה יַד־יְיָ הוֹיָה, בְּמִקְנֶךָ אֲשֶׁר בְּשָׂדֶה, בְּסוּסִים בְּחֻמְרִים בְּגַמְלִים, בְּבָקָר וּבְצֹאן, דָּבָר כְּבֹד מְאֹד:

וּבְזֹרֵעַ נְטוּיָה. זֶה הַחֲרָב. כְּמָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וְחָרְבוּ שְׁלוֹפָה בְּיָדוֹ, נְטוּיָה עַל־יְרוּשָׁלַיִם:

וּבְמִרְאָה גְדוֹל, זֶה גְלוּי שְׂכִינָה. כְּמָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: אוּ הִנֵּסָה אֱלֹהִים, לְבוֹא לְקַחַת לוֹ גוֹי מִקְרֹב גוֹי, בְּמִסֹּת בְּאֵתוֹת וּבְמוֹפְתִים וּבְמִלְחָמָה, וּבְיַד חֲזָקָה וּבְזֹרֵעַ נְטוּיָה, וּבְמוֹרָאִים גְּדֹלִים. כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂה לָכֶם יְיָ אֱלֹהֵיכֶם בְּמִצְרַיִם, לְעֵינֵיכֶם:

וּבְאֵתוֹת. זֶה הַמַּטָּה, כְּמָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וְאֵת הַמַּטָּה הַזֶּה תִּקַּח בְּיָדֶךָ. אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשֶׂה־בוֹ אֶת־הָאֵתוֹת:

וּבְמוֹפְתִים. זֶה הַדָּם. כְּמָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וְנָתַתִּי מוֹפְתִים, בְּשָׁמַיִם וּבְאֶרֶץ

נוהגים להטיף מעט מן הכוס בעת אמירת דם ואש, וגם באמירת דם צפרדע, וכו', וגם באמירת דצ"ך עד"ש וכו'

דָּם. וְאֵשׁ. וְתִמְרוֹת עֶשֶׂן:

**“And the Lord took them out of Egypt with a mighty hand
and an outstretched arm, with awesome power, signs and wonder.”**

(Deuteronomy 26:8)

And the Lord took them out – Not by means of an angel, nor by means of a Saraf (fiery being), nor by means of a messenger but by means of the Holy One through His own glory, as it is said,
“And I shall pass through the Land of Egypt on this night
and I shall smite the first born in the Land of Egypt from man to beast
and I will exact judgment against all the gods of Egypt,
I am the Lord.” Exodus 12:12

And I shall pass through the Land of Egypt on this night –
Not by means of an angel.
And I shall smite the first born in the Land of Egypt from man to beast
Nor by means of a fiery being.
and I will exact judgment against all the gods of Egypt, I am the Lord -
I am the one and not a messenger.
I am the Lord – And not another.

With a mighty hand – This refers to the plague of pestilence, as it is said, “Behold the hand of the Lord shall strike your cattle which are in the field, the horses, the donkeys, the camels, the herds and the flocks with a severe pestilence.” Exodus 9:3

With an outstretched arm - This refers to the sword, as it is said, “And His sword shall be drawn in His outstretched arm over Jerusalem.”
1 Chronicles 21:16

With awesome power – This is the revelation of the Divine Presence, as it is said, “Has God ventured to go and take for Himself one nation from the midst of another by prodigious acts, by signs and wonders, by war by a mighty outstretched arm and awesome power as the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your very eyes.” Deuteronomy 4:34

With signs – This refers to the staff, as it is written, “Take this staff in your hand that you may perform signs with it.” Exodus 4:17

And wonders – This refers to the blood, as it is written “I shall place wonders in the heavens and on the earth...”

*As we recite each of these three expressions we remove a bit of wine from our cup
with a finger or by pouring it from the cup.*

**“Dam” “Va’esh,” “vi’timrot ahsan”
Blood, fire and columns of smoke.”** (Joel 3:3)

Background

The Haggadah turns its attention to the plagues. It interprets the first part of the verse as a reference to the presence of God as the One who performs the plagues and the remainder of the verse as containing references to specific plagues. But why should the Haggadah refer to some plagues such as pestilence and blood and not to others in this verse from Deuteronomy? Rabbi Lorberbaum is troubled by this and attempts to read into the language of the Haggadah references to the other plagues as well. The plagues can be divided up in different ways and he finds ingenious ways to find such references in this verse. The plagues as a group are referred to by the expression “A mighty hand and an outstretched arm.” Similarly the reference to the plague is an opportunity to discuss the different nature of the various plagues. Who performed them, by what means and for what purpose?

And the Lord took them out – Not by means of an angel, nor by means of a Saraf, nor by means of a messenger but by means of the Holy One through His own glory. There are several questions that are raised by commentators on this entire passage as well as the terminology that is used here:

- 1. What is the difference between an angel (*Malach*), a fiery being (*Saraf*), a messenger (*Shaliach*) as well as the other terminology that is used for such beings in the Bible? Why does the Haggadah mention four categories of spiritual beings?**

There is a difference between a “messenger” and an “envoy.”¹⁷ A messenger has a choice about whether or not he performs a specific task, while an envoy is simply a means of performing the task and has no choice in its performance. If there is a divine decree, the envoy has no free will in the performance of the act any more than a stick that strikes someone has a choice in that act. The stick is not a messenger, but a means of performing the act. The envoy is an object that performs the will of others. An angel or a fiery being can be either a messenger or an envoy, an object that is used to fulfill the divine will.

The words *Malach* and *Saraf* refer to the nature of the act being performed. When the act is for the benefit of others, the one performing the act is a *Malach*, but when the act involves destruction or violence, then it is performed by a *Saraf*, sometimes referred to as a *Mashchit*, a destroyer (see the verse quoted in question two, below). These two types of beings can be messengers, with free will to act, or they can simply be the means that God uses to carry out His will. In this passage when the Maggid says “Not by means of an angel, and not by means of a...” we learn that while God may have acted through the agency of a *Malach* and a *Saraf*, they were merely the means of the act and not the actor. They were no different than a stick in the hands of someone striking another. Therefore, it was really God who performed these acts since the angel and the fiery beings were not messengers.

- 2. How can the Maggid tell us that God did not perform such acts by means of such beings when the Bible explicitly makes such statements? For instance, we read in the book of Numbers 20:16, “We cried out to the Lord and He heard our plea and sent an angel who freed us from Egypt,” and Exodus 12:23, “The Lord will pass over the door and not let the Destroyer enter and smite your home.”**

Rabbi Moses Maimonides also understands the term *Malach* as referring to the forces of nature that serve some larger divine purpose. When the Haggadah says that God did not perform an act by means of an angel, it means that this act wasn’t simply a coincidence of nature but a fulfillment of the divine will.

¹⁷ There really aren’t appropriate terms to differentiate in English between these two concepts – at least in my limited vocabulary. In Hebrew one is referred to as a *Keli*, an object or a utensil since it has no free will in performing the will of the other, and the other is a *Shaliach*, an agent, who can always choose whether or not he performs the specific act.

At the time of the Exodus from Egypt, there were four divine acts that occurred: God smote the first born of Egypt, saved the first born of the Israelites, brought judgment against the Gods of Egypt and revealed His presence to the entire land of Egypt. The four expressions in the Haggadah are meant to teach us that each of them was uniquely and solely an act of God, not a coincidence of nature or some predetermined act that was set in motion with the creation of the world. Both the act of destroying the Egyptians and the act of saving the Israelites were acts of God.

3. How does the Maggid reach the conclusion that the four phrases in Exodus 12:12 refer to these four categories of angel, fiery beings, messenger and another?

Each of the expressions in Exodus, then, refers to a type of divine act. “I will pass through the land of Egypt” is a reference to the *Malach* – God, and not some *Malach*, saved the Israelites while destroying others: “I will smite” refers to what might be thought of as the act of the *Saraf*: It was God who killed the first-born and not some other force. The last two phrases in this verse, “I will exact judgment” and “I am the Lord” are meant to teach us that the judgment of the gods of Egypt and God’s revelation were not through some other means but through an act of God.

With a mighty hand – This refers to the plague of pestilence...

How do we know that the expression, “A mighty hand,” is a reference to the fifth plague, *Dever* or Pestilence?

The answer is to be found in how we see the overall count of the plagues. If we look carefully at the way in which the ten plagues are described in the Torah, one will see that they can be divided into two groups of five plagues each. In the first grouping of five plagues, Pharaoh hardens his own heart but in the second grouping of five plagues, God causes Pharaoh’s heart to be hardened.

Pestilence is the fifth plague. Therefore the Egyptians experienced this plague, they had experienced an entire “hand” of plagues (especially when we consider that the third plague is referred to as “The finger of God”). The expression “the Hand of God” is also used in reference to the tenth plague. ”¹⁸

With an outstretched arm - This refers to the sword... Commenting on the verse in I Chronicles 21, the Zohar says that we should understand it in an allegorical fashion. God does not have a “Sword...drawn in His outstretched arm.” Rather, this means that the forces of retribution are given ‘permission’ to act against those who commit evil acts. This is the intention of the Maggid as well. We can conclude from the similar use of language, “With an outstretched arm,” that the verse in Deuteronomy also implies that God has given reign to the forces of retribution. The sword here is a reference to the last five plagues. During the first five plagues Pharaoh was given the opportunity to repent and to stop the plagues. During the second set of five plagues Pharaoh lost his ability. Retribution was inevitable.

We see then that the two expressions in this verse, “With a mighty hand and an outstretched arm,” make up all ten plagues. With a mighty hand refers to the first five plagues and “with an outstretched arm” refers to the second series of five plagues. The nature of these two series of plagues was different from one another.

¹⁸ OK you have me here! I searched and I searched and I could not find a specific reference that connects the tenth plague with the expression, the hand of the Lord. We are repeatedly told that God took Israel out of Egypt with an outstretched hand but there is no specific use of this expression in connection with the tenth plague as we have with the fifth: See Exodus 9:3. Am I overlooking something here?

With awesome power – this is the revelation of the Divine Presence. Both verses in this passage use the expression *Mora Gadol*, “awesome power.” How does the Maggid conclude that this expression refers to the revelation of the Divine presence? What is it about this expression that allows the Haggadah to reach this conclusion?

The verse from Deuteronomy Chapter 4 says that God acted with a “Mighty outstretched arm and awesome power as the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your very eyes.” The expression at the end of this verse, “Before your very eyes,” implies that it is speaking about something spiritual and not something physical. We see this same use of the expression, “Before your eyes” in a number of different commentaries which discuss the breaking of the Ten Commandments. The Midrash says that when Moses smashed the tablets, the letters flew up to heaven. How do we know this? A verse says, “I broke them before your eyes,” implying that the people saw this miraculous spiritual sight. Similarly here the words “Before your eyes” imply that the Divine Presence appeared to the people in Egypt.¹⁹ “Before your eyes” implies something that is seen as in a vision but cannot be measured or felt.

With signs – This refers to the staff. It is difficult to understand the connection between ‘signs’ and ‘the staff of Moses.’ The staff is not a sign but merely the utensil that was used to create the signs. So why is it referred to in this way? This verse refers to the ten plagues. Why mention the staff at all since it was not used to perform all of the plagues but only some of them? Finally, the earlier part of this verse in Deuteronomy 26 already mentioned the ten plagues so what does a reference to the staff or the signs add to our understanding of this verse?

To understand the reference to the staff, we must understand something about the nature of prophecy and sympathetic acts.²⁰ Prophets from the time of Abraham on performed sympathetic rites that, in some way, were meant to be prophetic or predictive of the future. Nachmanides suggests that Abraham’s travels throughout the land of Canaan were meant to predict Israel’s future conquest of the land. Similarly, when Jeremiah tells Serayah to read his prophecies and then to bind them to a rock and throw them into the Euphrates, he is performing a sympathetic rite that is meant to be symbolic or an imaginative prediction of what the future holds (See Jeremiah 51:59-64). Similarly, the use of the staff is meant to be a sympathetic of what is about to befall Egypt.

Moses performs three acts with his staff: he turns the staff into a serpent; he causes his arm to become leprous and he makes the water turn into blood. (Exodus, Chapter 4)

These three acts are all necessary in showing Egypt the power of God. Even though the staff was created on the eve of the creation of the world (Pirke Avot) for the purpose of performing good acts for the people of Israel, the use of the staff in these three acts shows that the staff can also be used for the purpose of punishing Egypt as well.

Also, the three acts symbolize the three types of plagues included in the ten plagues: some were performed by means of the staff; some by Moses; and some by the Holy One. The word “sign” is a way of referring to sympathetic acts. The serpent was a symbol of the power of the staff. The transformation of Moses’ hand to leprosy was symbolic of his role in the performance of the plagues. The transformation of the river to blood was symbolic of the power of God to reverse something created for compassion to something that could carry out judgment. In each case the symbolic act transforms goodness to punishment.

¹⁹ A simpler explanation which Rabbi Lorberbaum ignores is the connection between the word “Mora,” awesome, and “Mareh” which means appearance. Although the two words are not linguistically connected to each other, they sound alike and that is enough reason for a Midrash to connect them to one another.

²⁰ Sympathetic acts – In Hebrew the expression is “Poel Dimyoni.” I have translated it with a reference to the term Sympathetic Rites used by Arnold Van Gennep in his classic work, *The Rites of Passage*. Van Gennep writes: Sympathetic rites, those based on the belief in the reciprocal action of like on like, of opposite on opposite, of the container on the contained, of the part on the whole, of image and real object or real being or word and deed... (Page 5). In a sympathetic rite an act is performed which in some way mimics or imitates the hoped for result.

And wonders – This refers to the blood. This verse returns to the plague of blood to explain the significance of this sympathetic act. The other plagues were not sympathetic acts, but acts of retribution and judgment against Pharaoh and Egypt. Blood, however, is referred to both as a plague and as a sympathetic act. First God presents this wonder as a way of illustrating to the people and to Pharaoh how powerful God is. What is the symbolism then of this act?

Water is a symbol of loving kindness (*Hesed*) in Kabbalah and blood is a symbol of judgment (*Din*). The transformation of the water from the Nile from water to blood is a way of proving that God is a God not only of love, but of judgment, if necessary. The verse from the book of Joel expresses the rising of the powers of judgment in the world.

The Ten Plagues

דָּבָר אַחֵר. בְּיַד חֲזָקָה שְׁתֵּימָּם. וּבְזֵרַע נְטוּיָה שְׁתֵּימָּם. וּבְמוֹרָא גָדוֹל
שְׁתֵּימָּם. וּבְאֵתוֹת שְׁתֵּימָּם. וּבְמוֹפְתִים שְׁתֵּימָּם: אֱלוֹ עֶשֶׂר מִכּוֹת שֶׁהֵבִיא
הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא עַל־הַמִּצְרִים בְּמִצְרַיִם, וְאֵלוֹ הֵן:

דָּם. צַפְרִידֵי. פְּנִים. עָרוֹב. דָּבָר. שְׁחִין. בְּרָד. אַרְבֶּה. חֲשָׂד.
מִפֶּת בְּכוֹרוֹת:

רַבִּי יְהוּדָה הֵיךְ נוֹתֵן בָּהֶם סְמָנִים:
דָּ"ד עַד"ש בְּאֲח"ב:

Another explanation: With a mighty hand – two (plagues); an outstretched arm: two (plagues); with great terror: two (plagues); with signs: two (plagues); and with wonders: two (plagues).

These are the ten plagues which the Holy One brought upon the Egyptians in Egypt. They are:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| 1. <i>Dam</i> – Blood | 6. <i>Sh'chin</i> - Boils |
| 2. <i>Tzfardeah</i> – Frogs | 7. <i>Barad</i> – Hail |
| 3. <i>Kinim</i> – Fleas | 8. <i>Arbeh</i> – Locust |
| 4. <i>Arov</i> – Wild Animals | 9. <i>Hoshech</i> – Darkness |
| 5. <i>Dever</i> – Pestilence | 10. <i>Makat Bechorot</i> – The Death of the first born |

Rabbi Judah grouped the plagues by initials:

Datzach Adash Ba'achav

Background:

People often ask why ten plagues? Wasn't God powerful enough to convince the Egyptians with one devastating plague that would force them to free the Israelites from Egypt? Rabbi Lorberbaum answers this question in a novel way by connecting the plagues with the ten utterances with which God created the world. The plagues are the opposite of creation – they represent the ten acts of un-creation. They made Pharaoh aware that just as God could create the world he also had the power to take away the blessings of creation. These ten utterances play an important role in the history of Jewish thought and in Jewish mysticism in particular. They are often associated with the ten Sephirot with which the world is created.

These are the ten plagues...

- 1. Why are there ten plagues?**
- 2. Why were these ten plagues the ones with which the Holy One chose to strike the Egyptians?**

*“The world was created with ten utterances. What does this teach? It teaches us that the punishment of the wicked who destroy the world created by ten utterances is increased while the righteous who preserve the world created by ten utterances are rewarded.” **Pirke Avot 5:1***

According to the sages the world was created through an act of speech. There were ten utterances by God through which creation came about. These utterances are found in the opening chapter of Genesis. Nine of them begin, “And God said,” and the tenth begins with the word, *Bereshit*, “in the beginning,” which the Talmud considers to be an “utterance.” If God is all-powerful then certainly He could create the world with a single utterance. So why was it necessary for the Holy One to create the world through a series of such utterances instead? According to *Pirke Avot*, “The Ethics of the Fathers,” the ten utterances were meant to increase the punishment due to the wicked that destroy the world through their actions. This way instead of just one punishment for a single utterance, they are liable for ten punishments, one for each aspect of creation that they destroy through their actions. Similarly, the increase in utterances increased the reward due to the righteous.

Pharaoh denied the existence of God by refusing to free the Israelites. We see this in the beginning of Exodus when he responds to Moses' request by saying, “Who is the Lord that I should heed Him?” (Exodus 5:2) He is not simply a tyrant; Pharaoh is also an atheist who denies God as the creator of everything. The plagues are an attempt to show Pharaoh just how powerful the Holy One really is. Just as God creates and maintains the universe, so God has the power to “un-create” the universe as well. Each plague is related to one of the ten utterances. Just as each utterance expresses the creation of one particular aspect of the universe, so, through each plague, God reverses His creation. In this way Pharaoh saw that, just as God could create the world, so too He had the power to reverse the creation of the world. The plagues were an illustration of the power of God and the powerless of the Pharaoh.

The Plagues, however, do not follow the chronological order of the utterances of creation and the creation of the world. What logic is there to the order of the plagues, then? The plagues reflect creation in a different fashion. They are listed both sequentially and thematically.²¹

²¹ The logic is not so obvious here. Rabbi Lorberbaum seems to be suggesting that the ten plagues follow an order based on human needs. The first half follows the order of creation and the second half follows the order of essential human needs.

The first five plagues reflect creation:

1. The first creation is water - blood
2. The swarming creatures come forth from the water – frogs
3. The creatures closest to the water are the land creatures – lice
4. Then the other land animals – wild animals
5. The heavens come next, just as the planets and the sun were created. The “heavens” are the source of the pestilence – pestilence

The second half reflects on the human being and his basic needs:

1. The creation of the human being – Boils
2. The creation of the firmament; protection from danger - hail
3. The creation of the vegetation and food - locust
4. The creation of the light - Darkness
5. The final plague – the death of first born

The Ten Utterances and the Ten Acts of Un-creation

The Utterance: And God Said...	The Creation	The Plague	The Connection
1. In the Beginning (There are two separate creations associated with the first utterance.)	Heavens and Earth ²²	5. Pestilence	According to Rambam, the animal soul comes from the Shamayim ²³
	Water	1. Blood	The opposite of water is blood
2. Let there be light	The lights and planets ²⁴	9. Darkness	The opposite of light
3. Let there be a firmament	The firmaments	7. Hail	Hail comes from the firmament
4. Let the waters below be gathered to one place	The creation of the dry land and earth	3. Fleas	Aaron strikes the earth with the staff to cause the fleas
5. Let the earth sprout vegetation	Vegetation	8. Locust	God causes the locust which consume the vegetation
6. Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky	The lights and the planets	See utterance number 2	See utterance number 2

²² The earth is mentioned twice: In a general way at the beginning of creation and on the fourth day, when it actually emerges as a full creation. The first utterance, then, represents two aspects of creation: the creation of the heavens and the creation of water that preceded the creation of the earth.

²³ This is a Maimonidian idea. The animal's life force comes from the lowest level of the heavens and the human soul comes from the one closest to God.

²⁴ The creation of the lights and planets is mentioned twice, on the second day and again in the sixth utterance of creation. They really represent only one creation.

7. Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures	Sea creatures and swarming animals	2. Frogs	The frogs emerge from the waters
8. Let the earth bring forth every type of living creature	Land animals	4. Wild animals	The wild animals are created by God and God can turn them against humanity
9. Let us make human in our image	Human kind	6. Boils	God causes the human body to rebel against humanity
10. Be Fertile and multiply	The ability to propagate	10. The death of first born	God gives first born and can take them away

Rabbi Yehudah abbreviated the plagues with their initials:

What purpose is served in grouping the plagues together in this fashion and abbreviating them?

Organizing and abbreviating the plagues in this fashion is a way of showing the overall order of the plagues. The plagues are grouped into three subsets of three plagues each with the final plague a climax to the all of them. Each subset follows a pattern of two plagues with warnings and the third without any warning at all. Each subset of plagues was meant to teach the people a lesson unique to that group of plagues. The lesson is not complete and obvious until the third plague in each grouping of plagues.

D'ztach - Blood, Frogs, and Lice: The first group of plagues was meant to teach the people that God punishes those who transgress the will of God. The Egyptians were warned twice and only in the third plague do the magicians and the people of Egypt acknowledge God's great power when they say of the plagues, "It is the finger of God!" (Exodus 8:15) Only with the third plague do they realize that one can't defy the will of God.

Adash – Wild beasts, Pestilence, and Boils: The second group of plagues is singled out because we are told that they struck the Egyptians but not the Israelites. (Exodus 8:18) The magicians of Egypt could only protect themselves from these plagues until we reach the sixth plague." The Magicians were unable to confront Moses because of the inflammation..." (Exodus 9:11)²⁵

Ba'achav – Hail, Locust, Darkness, the Death of the First Born: The final group of plagues taught the Egyptians that these plagues were not merely chance or a product of the astrological signs (*Mazel*²⁶), but the actual hand of God. First, these plagues are so extraordinary and out of the normal course of nature that they must be a product of divine. And second, the plague of darkness proves that it is not simply bad astrological signs changing the luck of the Israelites and the Egyptians. The final plague drives home this lesson. Lest one think that this is the work of an angel or some type of supernatural being, the final plague proves this is not so. Only God has the power to differentiate between the "sperm" of the firstborn and all others.

²⁵ Actually the Torah never says that the plague of boils only affected the Egyptians and not the Israelites as it says concerning the other two plagues...but most of the commentators and the Midrashim assume this was the case.

²⁶ The word *Mazal*, which we use for luck, literally means "star." The common astrological belief is that all luck comes from the formation of the stars. The Talmud, however, says *Ain mazal liyisrael*, "Israel's destiny is not determined by the stars." The final group of plagues then is a repudiation of the idea that the stars determine someone's good or bad luck.

Rabbi Yosi HaGallili's Mathamatics

רבי יוסי הגלילי אומר: מנין אתה אומר, שלקו המצרים במצרים עשר מכות, ועל הים, לקו חמשים מכות? במצרים מה הוא אומר: ויאמרו החרטום אל-פרעה, אצבע אלהים הוא. ועל הים מה הוא אומר? וירא ישראל את-היד הגדלה, אשר עשה יי במצרים, וייראו העם את-יי. ויאמינו ביי, ובמשה עבדו. כמה לקו באצבע, עשר מכות: אמור מעתה, במצרים לקו עשר מכות, ועל-הים, לקו חמשים מכות:

רבי אליעזר אומר: מנין שכל-מכה ומכה, שהביא הקדוש ברוך הוא על המצרים במצרים, היתה של ארבע מכות? שנאמר: ישלח-בם חרון אפו, עברה וזעם וצרה. משלחת מלאכי רעים. עברה אחת. וזעם שתיים. וצרה שלש. משלחת מלאכי רעים ארבע: אמור מעתה, במצרים לקו ארבעים מכות, ועל הים לקו מאתיים מכות:

רבי עקיבא אומר: מנין שכל-מכה ומכה, שהביא הקדוש ברוך הוא על המצרים במצרים, היתה של חמש מכות? שנאמר: ישלח-בם חרון אפו, עברה וזעם וצרה. משלחת מלאכי רעים. חרון אפו אחת. עברה שתיים. וזעם שלש. וצרה ארבע. משלחת מלאכי רעים חמש: אמור מעתה, במצרים לקו חמשים מכות, ועל הים לקו חמשים ומאתים מכות:

Rabbi Yosi the Galilean said: How do we know that the Egyptians were struck by ten plagues in Egypt and by fifty plagues at the sea?

What does it say (about the plagues) in Egypt? The Magicians said to Pharaoh: "It is the finger of God!" (Exodus 8:15) And concerning the sea what does it say: Israel saw the great hand which the Lord wrought in Egypt and the people feared the Lord and they believed in the Lord and in Moses His servant." (Exodus 14:31) How many plagues did He strike with a finger? Ten plagues.

Rabbi Eliezer said: How do we know that each plague that the Holy One brought upon the Egyptians in Egypt was really equivalent to four plagues?

As it said, "And He sent against them His burning anger: wrath, indignation, trouble, and messengers of evil." (Psalms 78:49) Wrath is one. Indignation is two. Trouble is three. And "messengers of evil" is four. From this you may conclude, forty plagues in Egypt and two hundred plagues by the sea.

Rabbi Akiva said: How do we know that each plague that the Holy One brought upon the Egyptians in Egypt was really equivalent to five plagues?

As it said, "And He sent against them His burning anger: wrath, indignation, trouble, and messengers of evil." (Psalms 78:49) His burning anger is one. Wrath is two. Indignation is three. Trouble is four. And "messengers of evil" is five. From this you may conclude, fifty plagues in Egypt and two hundred and fifty plagues by the sea.

Background

The plagues become almost ridiculous here as they multiply from ten to fifty to two hundred fifty. But more serious from Rabbi Lorberbaum's perspective is the fact that these statements appear to contradict a statement in the Mishnah that plainly says that there ten plagues in Egypt and ten at the Red Sea. As the fundamental code of Jewish law, the Mishnah is the official opinion of the sages. So can we reconcile the opinion of these sages with the one in the Mishnah? Rabbi Lorberbaum draws on the Kabbalistic notion that there are not only ten Sephirot of holiness but also ten anti-Sephirot of impurity that give vitality to the world of darkness and judgment. These Sephirot are sometimes referred to as crowns (Ketarin). They are also referred to in the Zohar as the fifty gates of impurity. When Israel was redeemed from Egypt, the nation had already descended almost to the lowest of these gates of impurity, which would have made it impossible to redeem her from slavery. That is why, according to the Kabbalah, they had to leave in such haste. If Israel had stayed in Egypt one more day, they would have become unredeemable!

Rabbi Yosi the Galilean said: How do you know that each plague...is equivalent to four plagues?

Rabbi Yosi's strange statement has inspired many different questions:

- 1. How do we reconcile this statement with the one in the *Mishnah, Pirke Avot*, which says that there were only ten plagues at the Red Sea? (See *Avot*, 5:5)**

The numbers ten and fifty should not be taken literally. This number, like the number ten, is an allegorical way of referring to the spiritual state of the Israelites while they were in Egypt (?) and how they experienced the presence of God during the plagues and at the sea. Egypt was a place of darkness and impurity, where the forces of evil reigned. The nation had already descended to the lowest levels of impurity in Egypt. There are fifty gates of impurity, which are some times referred to as the ten crowns of impurity, and Israel had already descended to the fiftieth gate. Beyond this gate, there is no redemption because the spiritual dark angel of Egypt would now have complete control over the nation. When Rabbi Yosi said that there were fifty plagues at the sea, it was a way of saying that God vanquished the dark angel of Egypt before the people so that they were freed of the forces of evil. Ten and fifty are really the same, then.

- 2. How can we conclude that all the plagues were each a "finger of God" since this expression is used for only one particular plague and not for all of them?**

The word *Etzba*, finger, refers not only to one plague but really to all the ten plagues. Just as each of the *Sephirot* in *Kabbalah* contain elements of the other nine *Sephirot*, so too the ten *Sephirot*, or Crowns of Evil, contain elements of the other ten crowns. In Egypt, however, the people of Israel were incapable of seeing that God had the ability to vanquish all the forces of evil in the land. Each plague appeared to be an attack on one particular force of evil. It was only at the Red Sea that the people of Israel saw that God had the power to vanquish all the forces of evil in Egypt; so they now saw God's hand (since each finger represents ten, a hand is fifty plagues) descend and destroy the fifty gates of impurity. *Etzba* and *Yad*, then, are references not only to the nature of God, but to how Israel perceived God.

- 3. The proof that Rabbi Yosi offers does not appear to make a lot of sense. Can we really conclude that *Etzba*, finger, is one or ten plagues and that *Yad*, hand, is five times as many plagues? The Bible does not show such mathematical exactness. If God is all-powerful, surely he could also perform fifty plagues with "a finger." Surely these expressions have some metaphorical meaning and should not be taken literally!**

That is exactly the point. The hand and the finger of God are allegorical ways of speaking about the power of God and the ability to perceive God's presence in the world. Only at the sea did the people get the whole picture, and that is why they "believed in God and Moses His servant." The plagues were meant to be an object lesson, not just for the Egyptians, but for the Israelites as well. It was at this point that the people began to understand God as the first cause and creator of the universe who is All-powerful.

Rabbi Eliezer asked:

What is the basis of the controversy between Rabbis Eliezer and Akiva? Is there a basis to their difference of opinion beyond a simple play on the words in Psalms?

Some of the commentators suggest that the controversy between Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Akiva has to do with the source of each of the plagues. In medieval thought, there are four basic elements from which the world is created: air, fire, water, and earth. Each plague was created from these four basic elements. When Rabbi Eliezer says each plague is really four plagues, this is what he is referring to. Rabbi Akiva, on the other hand, is of the opinion that the plagues were constructed not only from the four elements, but also from a fifth spiritual element: *Koach HaMichaber*, "the power of the divine author."

The word *Michaber*, "author," can also be translated as "the one who causes the elements to combine." The elements are separate from one another. God is the cause of synergy, a working together of the different elements of creation. By uniting, the combined elements of the universe become greater than sum of the separate parts of creation. The universe is made up of elements, but God is the one that causes them to become united. Rabbi Akiva, always a mystic at heart, understands that it takes more than physical elements for the universe to become a tangible existence.

Dayenu!
It would have been enough!

כַּמָּה מַעֲלוֹת טוֹבוֹת לְמָקוֹם עֲלֵינוּ:

	אלו הוציאנו ממצרים,
דינו:	ולא עשה בהם שפטים,
	אלו עשה בהם שפטים,
דינו:	ולא עשה באלהיהם,
	אלו עשה באלהיהם,
דינו:	ולא הרג את-בכוריהם,
	אלו הרג את-בכוריהם,
דינו:	ולא נתן לנו את-ממונם,
	אלו נתן לנו את-ממונם,
דינו:	ולא קרע לנו את-הים,
	אלו קרע לנו את-הים,
דינו:	ולא העבירנו בתוכו בקרבה

אלו הֶעֱבִירָנוּ בְּתוֹכוֹ בְּחֶרֶבָה,
וְלֹא שָׁקַע צָרֵינוּ בְּתוֹכוֹ,
 דִּינֹו:
 אֱלוֹ שָׁקַע צָרֵינוּ בְּתוֹכוֹ,
וְלֹא סִפַּק צָרָכֵנוּ בְּמִדְבַּר אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה,
 דִּינֹו:
 אֱלוֹ סִפַּק צָרָכֵנוּ בְּמִדְבַּר אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה,
וְלֹא הֶאֱכִילָנוּ אֶת־הַמֶּן,
 דִּינֹו:
 אֱלוֹ הֶאֱכִילָנוּ אֶת־הַמֶּן,
וְלֹא נָתַן לָנוּ אֶת־הַשַּׁבָּת,
 דִּינֹו:
 אֱלוֹ נָתַן לָנוּ אֶת־הַשַּׁבָּת,
וְלֹא קִרְבָּנוּ לְפָנֵי הַר סִינִי,
 דִּינֹו:
 אֱלוֹ קִרְבָּנוּ לְפָנֵי הַר סִינִי,
וְלֹא נָתַן לָנוּ אֶת־הַתּוֹרָה,
 דִּינֹו:
 אֱלוֹ נָתַן לָנוּ אֶת־הַתּוֹרָה,
וְלֹא הִכְנִיסָנוּ לְאֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל,
 דִּינֹו:
 אֱלוֹ הִכְנִיסָנוּ לְאֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל,
וְלֹא בָּנָה לָנוּ אֶת־בַּיִת הַבְּחִירָה,
 דִּינֹו:

עַל אַחַת כַּמָּה וְכַמָּה טוֹבָה כְּפוּלָה וּמְכַפֶּלֶת לְמָקוֹם עָלֵינוּ:

שְׁהוּצִיאָנוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם,
 וְעָשָׂה בָּהֶם שְׁפָטִים,
 וְעָשָׂה בְּאֵלֵי הַיָּם,
 וְהָרַג אֶת־בְּכוֹרֵיהֶם,
 וְנָתַן לָנוּ אֶת־מִמּוֹנָם,
 וְקָרַע לָנוּ אֶת־הַיָּם,
 וְהֶעֱבִירָנוּ בְּתוֹכוֹ בְּחֶרֶבָה,
 וְשָׁקַע צָרֵינוּ בְּתוֹכוֹ,
 וְסִפַּק צָרָכֵנוּ בְּמִדְבַּר אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה,
 וְהֶאֱכִילָנוּ אֶת־הַמֶּן,
 וְנָתַן לָנוּ אֶת־הַשַּׁבָּת,
 וְקִרְבָּנוּ לְפָנֵי הַר סִינִי,
 וְנָתַן לָנוּ אֶת־הַתּוֹרָה,
 וְהִכְנִיסָנוּ לְאֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל,
 וְבָּנָה לָנוּ אֶת־בַּיִת הַבְּחִירָה,
 לְכַפֵּר עַל־כָּל־עֲוֹנוֹתֵינוּ.

God has bestowed many favors upon us.

Had He brought us out of Egypt, and not executed judgments against the Egyptians,
It would have been enough--Dayyenu

Had He executed judgments against the Egyptians, and not their gods,
It would have been enough--Dayyenu

Had He executed judgments against their gods and not put to death their firstborn,
It would have been enough--Dayyenu

Had He put to death their firstborn, and not given us their riches,
It would have been enough--Dayyenu

Had He given us their riches, and not split the Sea for us,
It would have been enough--Dayyenu

Had He split the Sea for us, and not led us through it on dry land,
It would have been enough--Dayyenu

Had He led us through it on dry land, and not sunk our foes in it,
It would have been enough--Dayyenu

Had He sunk our foes in it, and not satisfied our needs in the desert for forty years,
It would have been enough--Dayyenu

Had He satisfied our needs in the desert for forty years, and not fed us the manna,
It would have been enough--Dayyenu

Had He fed us the manna, and not given us the Sabbath,
It would have been enough--Dayyenu

Had He given us the Sabbath, and not brought us to Mount Sinai,
It would have been enough--Dayyenu

Had He brought us to Mount Sinai, and not given us the Torah,
It would have been enough--Dayyenu

Had He given us the Torah, and not brought us into Israel,
It would have been enough--Dayyenu

Had He brought us into Israel, and not built the Temple for us,
It would have been enough--Dayyenu

How doubled and redoubled is the good which the One who is Present has bestowed

upon us: He brought us out of Egypt, and punished the Egyptians; He smote their gods, and slew their firstborn; He gave us their wealth and split the Sea for us; He led us through it on dry land, and sunk our foes in it; He sustained us in the desert for forty years, and fed us with the manna; He gave us the Sabbath, and brought us to Mount Sinai; He gave us the Torah, and brought us to Israel; He built the Temple for us, to atone for all our sins.

Background

At first glance Dayyenu is a strange poem. What does it mean to say that each of these divine acts of grace is “enough for us?” Would it really have been enough for God to take us out of Egypt but not allow us to cross the Red Sea? Would it have been enough to bring us to Mount Sinai but not give us the Torah once we got there? So we are left wondering: what makes each of these acts of divine favor so significant and important that even if this was all that God had done for us we would be able to say, “Dayyenu?” Rabbi Lorberbaum explores each statement in this poem and answers the question: How were these acts Dayyenu, enough for us? And in what way could we have lived without some of these gifts from God? Each statement is presented in the positive and the negative. We are told that it would have been enough and we are also told that if God had not done this act (but only another) that too would have been enough. Rabbi Lorberbaum explores both sides of these statements.

Had He performed judgments...It would have been enough: As we have already seen in the passage *Avadim Hayyinu*, the nature of God’s acts in Egypt created a unique relationship between God and the Israel. By performing these acts of judgment, God made a public commitment to the Jewish people. This commitment was irrevocable. Even if Israel sinned, as they did at the Golden Calf, God could not completely desert the Jewish people. If God was to desert the nation or destroy them, it would not only be a tragedy for Israel but a *Hillul Hashem*, a desecration of God’s name in the world. God’s judgments of others and His acts on behalf of the Jewish people made it clear to the whole world that we are “the children of the living God.” By simply performing these acts of judgments, then, God made it so that no matter what happened He was committed to Israel.

Had He executed judgments against their gods...It would have been enough: What did Israel stand to gain from God’s acts of judgment against the gods of Egypt? These judgments were “sympathetic acts²⁷” that would bear testimony that eventually God would vanquish the other deities and prove the gods of all the other nations to be false. The acts of the forefathers are a sign of future events. They are a foreshadowing of the Messianic era. By performing these acts in Egypt Israel knew that their future redemption was also assured.

...and not killed the first born it would have been enough: The acts of judgments are so great they are even greater than the all the plagues, even the death of the first born. Why was this plague singled out of all the plagues? Because this plague was the one that proved beyond any question that the plagues were the hand of God and not simply coincidence. Only God can distinguish between the fetus of the first born and all other fetus. Therefore God’s judgment of the gods of Egypt is even enough compared with the plagues. Even if God had not carried out the tenth plague the judgment of the gods of Egypt would still have been enough.

Had He given us their wealth...It would have been enough: What did Israel have to gain from taking the wealth of the Egyptians before they left Egypt? Wealth had no use to the people in the wilderness so Israel had nothing to gain by taking silver and gold from the Egyptians. In fact the language of the Torah suggests that God didn’t simply give them permission to take the property of the Egyptians but asked them to do so. The plundering of Egypt, then, must have had some greater significance. This act is yet another example of Sympathetic Acts which foreshadow the messianic era. The prophets predicted that Israel would be given great wealth in the Messianic era: “In place of bronze they will bring silver.”

²⁷ See pages 42 and 57 above for a discussion of this idea of sympathetic acts.

Had He not split the sea...it would have been enough: How is it possible to say that it would have been sufficient for God to perform some of these miracles such as judging the gods of Egypt and killing the first born but not splitting the Red Sea? What would have been the point of the redemption with out the splitting of the sea? Rabbi Ashkenazi suggests that even had God not split the sea there were other ways that he could have crossed the Red Sea (boats for instance). So had he preformed all these other miracles but provided us with a more natural way of crossing the sea it certainly would have been enough. But why would the miracle of the splitting been enough if this is all God had done? The splitting of the sea proved God's divinity to the entire world. According to a Midrash not only did the Sea split but all bodies of water split at the moment proving to all people God's awesome power.

Had he not provided us with our needs in the wilderness.... Providing food to the world is one of the things that God does not only for Israel but for the entire world. So, on the one hand it would have been fine had this particular miracle not been mention.

On the other hand providing food for an entire nation in the wilderness was truly miraculous. By providing for the people in the wilderness God taught the people to depend on God and thereby helped them to become more worthy of receiving the Torah at Sinai. Forcing them to go to the wilderness was yet another act of purification that helped them prepare for the events at Mount Sinai.

Shabbat...would have been enough: *Shabbat* is equal to all the other commandments. Therefore had God simply given us the Sabbath it would have been sufficient, since this is the most precious of all the commandments which God has given us.

Another interpretation: Rabbi Eliezer Ashkenazi, in his work *Ma'asei Hashem* offers another interpretation of *Dayyenu*.

He suggests that we should read the expression *Dayyenu* not as a demonstrative statement but as a question. "Would it really have been enough for us?" He uses a parable to explain this interpretation. Imagine a slave of a certain king who is rewarded with his own small kingdom. The slave, while grateful might say to the king: "How can I rule over my kingdom when I don't have royal garb? How can I rule over my kingdom when I don't have horses? How can I rule over my kingdom when I don't have subjects and slaves? How can I rule over my kingdom when I am lacking in an understanding of the rules of kingship? With each request the king would give his slave what was necessary for him to rule over his kingdom. Similarly, we say to God, God you have taken us out of Egypt but is this really enough? You haven't completed the job of making us a nation of priests and a holy people? It is only with all the miracles and gifts referred to in *Dayyenu* that God's gift is complete.²⁸

How doubled and redoubled is the good which the One who is Present has bestowed upon us. How is it that the miracles and gifts which the divine has given us are doubled and redoubled? What does this mean? Since many, if not all, the miracles mentioned in *Dayyenu* are acts which foreshadow the future redemption of the Jewish people, by saying that they are "Doubled and redoubled" we are saying that each act of grace has double significance. They were performed in the time of the Exodus and they will be performed again in the days of the coming of the Messiah.

²⁸ Rabbi Lorberbaum ends this alternative explanation by saying: "this is a far fetched explanation."

Rabban Gamliel Hayah Omer Rabbi Gamliel's Teachings

רַבֵּן גַּמְלִיאֵל הָיָה אוֹמֵר: כָּל שֶׁלֹּא אָמַר וְשֵׁלְשָׁה דְבָרִים אֵלּוּ בַפֶּסַח, לֹא יֵצֵא יְדֵי חוֹבָתוֹ,
וְאֵלּוּ הֵן:

פֶּסַח. מַצָּה וּמָרוֹר:

Rabban Gamliel used to say: If one has not explained three things on Pesach,
one has not fulfilled his obligation.

And they are:

Pesach, Matzah, and Maror

Pesach

We do not lift up the bone but mere refer to it

פֶּסַח שֶׁהָיוּ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ אוֹכְלִים, בְּזִמְנֵי שְׁבִית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ הָיָה קָיָם, עַל שׁוֹם מָה? עַל שׁוֹם שֶׁפֶּסַח
הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא, עַל בִּתְּי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ בְּמִצְרַיִם, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וְאִמַּרְתֶּם זִבְחַ פֶּסַח הוּא לִי, אֲשֶׁר
פֶּסַח עַל בִּתְּי בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּמִצְרַיִם, בְּנִגְפוֹ אֶת-מִצְרַיִם וְאֶת-בְּתֵינֵנוּ הִצִּיל, וַיִּקַּד הָעָם
וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ.

Why did our fathers eat the Passover offering during the time that Temple was still standing? It is because the Holy One, Blessed be He, passed over the houses of our ancestors in Egypt, as it is written: "You shall say: It is the Passover offering for the Lord, who passed over the houses of the children in Egypt when He smote the Egyptians and spared our houses. The people knelt and bowed down."

Matzah

יגביה המצה ויאמר

מַצָּה זוֹ שֶׁאָנוּ אוֹכְלִים, עַל שׁוֹם מָה? עַל שׁוֹם שֶׁלֹּא הִסְפִּיק בְּצֻקָם לְשֵׁל אֲבוֹתֵינוּ לְהַחְמִיץ,
עַד שֶׁנִּגְלָה עֲלֵיהֶם מֶלֶךְ מַלְכֵי הַמַּלְכִּים, הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא, וּגְאָלָם, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וַיֹּאפֹּו
אֶת-הַבֶּצֶק, אֲשֶׁר הוֹצִיאוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם, עֲגַת מִצּוֹת, כִּי לֹא חָמֵץ: כִּי גֵרֵשׁוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם, וְלֹא יָכְלוּ
לְהַתְמַהֵמָה, וְגַם יָצָה לֹא עָשׂוּ לָהֶם.

One raises the Matzo and says:

Why do we eat this matzah? It is because the King of Kings, the Holy one, revealed Himself to our ancestors and redeemed them before their dough had time to ferment, as it is written: "They baked the dough which they had brought out of Egypt into unleavened cakes; for they were driven out of Egypt and could not delay, nor had they prepared any provision for their journey."

Maror

יגביה המרור ויאמר

מָרֹר זֶה נִשְׁאַנּוּ אוֹכְלִים, עַל נֹשִׂים מָה? עַל נֹשִׂים שֶׁמָּרְרוּ הַמִּצְרִים אֶת־חַיֵּי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ
בְּמִצְרַיִם, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וַיִּמְרְרוּ אֶת־חַיֵּיהֶם בְּעֵבֶדָה קָשָׁה, בְּחֶמֶר וּבְלִבְנִים, וּבְכָל־עֲבָדָה בְּשָׂדֵה:
אֵת כָּל־עֵבֶד דָּתָם, אֲשֶׁר עָבְדוּ בָהֶם בְּפָרֶךְ.

One raises the Maror and says:

Why do we eat this bitter herb? It is because the Egyptians embittered the lives of our fathers in Egypt, as it is written: "They made life bitter for them with hard labor, with clay and bricks, and with all kinds of labor in the field; whatever work tasks they performed were backbreaking."

Rabban Gamliel used to say: Usually such a statement should be written "Rabban Gamliel says..." Here the statement is "Rabban Gamliel used to say..." Why does the *Maggid* use this particular language? Rabbi Ashkenazi in *Ma'asei Hashem* suggests that Rabban Gamliel did not simply make this statement, but that this was his practice. He used to ask himself these three questions each time he sat down at the Seder table even if there was no one else to ask the questions. We are obligated, therefore not only to follow his law but to emulate his example.

The Pesach offering which our fathers ate in the time that the Temple was standing, for what reason? The reason we mention *Matzah* and *Maror* are obvious. Both are directly connected with the story of the Exodus. We eat *Matzah* because we left with haste from Egypt and the bread did not have time to rise, and we eat *Maror* as a symbol of the bitterness of slavery. But the reason Pesach offering is less obvious and more subtle. While we ate the *Pesach* offering on the night of the Passover there is no direct connection between the offering and the act of passing over as there is with *Matzah*. Rabban Gamliel suggests that we ate the offering because God passed over the houses of the Israelites. Yet what does the offering have to do with the miracle and how does the offering help us reenact the Passover experience?

Rabban Gamliel suggests that the reason Israel was worthy of having God passed over their houses is because they ate the *Pesach* offering. Because they obeyed God's commandment they were saved in Egypt. Thus by recalling the *Pesach* offering and eating it in the time of the Temple, the Jewish people are reenacting Israel's faith in God.

The final plague was unlike any of the other plagues in Egypt. While a distinction was made between Israel and the Egyptians in all the other plagues, only this plague required some sign for the people of Israel. The reason for this is that all the other plagues were performed through some intermediary means while the death of the first born was performed directly by God Himself.

The other plagues were performed through a righteous intermediary. There are many examples in the Talmud and in the Bible of righteous people and prophets who are given control over the powers of nature. Some examples of this are Joshua who makes the sun stand still at Gibeon, and Moses who splits the Red Sea. There are many examples in the Talmud such as Pinchas Ben Yair who also causes a river to split in half. What we learn from all these examples is that sometimes Israel is redeemed because of the righteousness of its leaders.

In the case of the tenth plague, however, Israel's redemption was dependent on their worthiness. And since the people had worshipped idols in Egypt they were not truly worthy of being saved. God therefore asked them to do something that would make them worthy of such redemption. They were told to set aside and slaughter a ram for the Pesach offering. Since the ram was one of the gods of Egypt they had to risk their lives by doing this. This proved that they were truly worthy of being redeemed on the night of the Passover. They showed that they were willing to risk everything for the sake of sanctifying God's name and therefore were worthy of God's protection.

Matzah, because we ate... The *Haggadah* explains that the reason we eat *Matzah* is to remind us of the haste with which we left Egypt. Yet we were commanded to eat *Matzah* prior to our flight from Egypt. So how can we explain the eating of *Matzah* in this way? There are, however, two separate reasons and two separate *Mitzvot* in eating *Matzah*. We eat *Matzah* all week of Pesach as a way of reminding ourselves that we were slaves in Egypt. *Matzah* is *Lechem Oni*, the bread of affliction. We refrain from eating leavened bread and eat only *Matzah* for seven days to symbolize the fact that the people of Israel were slaves in Egypt for a very long time. The Biblical seven days symbolize the seven days of creation and the many days we were enslaved. On the eve of Passover when we tell the story of the Exodus the *Matzah* symbolizes the haste with which we left Egypt.

Was leaving with haste really a sign of distinction? In Isaiah 52:12, "For you shall not go out with haste and nor go by flight for the Lord will go before you and the God of Israel shall be your rearguard." We are told that in the end of time redemption will come with haste but slowly and deliberately. So why is leaving Egypt with such haste considered to be a good thing? Rabbi Ashkenazi explained that the Israelites had to leave Egypt in haste because they were living in a place of impurity and God wished to get them out as quickly as possible so he could reveal himself to them. But in the end of time redemption will come more deliberately and slowly because Israel will not be in such dire danger. The haste with which we left Egypt was a sign of God's impatience to quickly establish a new covenant with the people and protect them from impurity.

Why do we eat this Maror? If *Maror* was a symbol of slavery, why don't we mention it first before the two symbols of redemption? It should have been *Maror*, *Pesach* and then *Matzah*.

The essential reason we were redeemed from Egypt was not to save us from the bitterness of slavery but to make us servants of the God. The *Haggadah* mentions redemption before the bitterness in order to emphasize that bitterness was only a secondary reason God took us out of Egypt. The main reason God took us out of Egypt was to bring us to Mount Sinai. Even those Israelites who were princes in Egypt and who did not necessarily suffer from the deprivations of slavery were in dire need of redemption. They could look back and say that their lives were not bitter but they were still thankful for the gift of God's redemption.

Hayav Adam Lirot Aztmo
A Person should see himself

בְּכָל דּוֹר וָדוֹר תִּיב אָדָם לְרֹאוֹת אֶת עֲצָמוֹ,
 כְּאִלוֹ הוּא יֵצֵא מִמִּצְרַיִם,

שֵׁנָאָמֵר: וְהִגַּדְתָּ לְבִנְךָ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא לֵאמֹר: בַּעֲבוּר זֶה עָשָׂה יְיָ לִי, בְּיֵצְאֹתִי מִמִּצְרַיִם. לֹא אֶת־אֲבוֹתַיִנוּ
 בְּלֶבֶד, גָּאֵל הַקְדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא, אֲלֵא אַף אוֹתָנוּ גָאֵל עִמָּהֶם, שֵׁנָאָמֵר: וְאוֹתָנוּ הוֹצִיא מִשָּׁם, לְמַעַן הִבִּיא
 אֶתָנוּ, לְתֵת לָנוּ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לְאֲבוֹתַיִנוּ.

**In every generation each person must see him/herself as though he/she personally had
 come out of Egypt,**

as it is written: "You shall tell your child on that day: This is on account of what the Lord did for me
 when I came out of Egypt." It was not only our ancestors whom the Holy One redeemed from slavery; we,
 too, were redeemed with them, as it is written: "He took us out from there so that He might take us to the
 land which He had sworn to our fathers."

יגביה הכוס, יכסה המצות ויאמר
 לְפִיכֶן אֲנַחְנוּ תִיבִים לְהוֹדוֹת, לְהַלֵּל, לְשַׁבַּח, לְפָאֵר, לְרוֹמֵם, לְהַדָּר, לְבָרֵךְ, לְעֵלֶה וּלְקַלֵּס, לְמִי שֶׁעָשָׂה
 לְאֲבוֹתַיִנוּ וְלָנוּ אֶת־כָּל־הַנִּסִּים הָאֵלֶּה. הוֹצִיאָנוּ מֵעֲבָדוֹת לְחֵרוֹת, מִיָּגוֹן לְשִׁמְחָה, וּמֵאֲכָל לַיּוֹם טוֹב,
 וּמֵאֲפֵלָה לְאוֹר גָּדוֹל, וּמִשְׁעָבוֹד לְגֵאֲלָה.

נֹאמֵר לְפָנָיו שִׁירָה חֲדָשָׁה. הַלְלוּיָהּ:

*The matzo is covered and the cup of wine is raised
 until the conclusion of the blessing:*

Therefore it is our duty to thank and praise, pay tribute and glorify, exalt and honor, bless and acclaim the
 One who performed all these miracles for our fathers and for us. He took us out of slavery into freedom,
 out of grief into joy, out of mourning into a festival, out of darkness into a great light, out of slavery into
 redemption.

We will recite a new song before Him! Halleluyah!

In every generation each person must see him/herself... This statement should not be understood
 literally. People often assume that it means that had their ancestors not left Egypt they would still be
 slaves there. But if this is the meaning of this statement then it is equally true for all the other miracles in
 history that God performed for the Jewish people. For instance, the same statement could be said
 concerning Purim (we should see ourselves as if we were personally saved from Haman...). Yet for other
 deliverances, it is customary to make a blessing in which one says, "Blessed are you...who redeemed our
 ancestors..." One does not say "and for us," as we do in the Pesach Haggadah.

What we are stating here is not that each person should see him/herself as if he/she went forth from slavery but rather that each person should see him/herself as if he/she was personally redeemed from Egypt to become participant in the covenant. While we did not personally experience slavery and redemption, we all can say that because our ancestors were redeemed from slavery, we have the privilege of being Jews and living by the Torah. In is in this sense that we are all connected to the Exodus and not in an experiential sense. We did not experience Egypt in an immediate sense as our ancestors did but the fact that our ancestors were redeemed has shaped our identity. That is our connection to the past

הִלְלוּהָ. הִלְלוּ עַבְדֵי יְיָ. הִלְלוּ אֶת־שֵׁם יְיָ. יְהִי שֵׁם יְיָ מְבָרַךְ מֵעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם: מִמְזֶרֶח
שָׁמֶשׁ עַד מְבֹאוֹ. מְהֵלֵל שֵׁם יְיָ. רָם עַל־כָּל־גּוֹיִם יְיָ. עַל הַשָּׁמַיִם כְּבוֹדוֹ: מִי כִּי אֱלֹהֵינוּ. הַמְגַבִּיחַ
לְשֹׁבֵת: הַמְשַׁפִּילִי לְרֵאוֹת בְּשָׁמַיִם וּבְאָרֶץ: מְקִימֵי מַעַפְרֵי דָל.
מֵאֲשַׁפֵּת יָרִים אֲבִיוֹן:
לְהוֹשִׁיבֵי עַם־נְדִיבִים. עִם נְדִיבֵי עַמּוֹ: מוֹשִׁיבֵי עֵקֶרֶת הַבַּיִת אִם הַבָּנִים שְׂמִחָה. הִלְלוּהָ:

Psalm 113

Praise the Lord! Praise, you servants of the Lord, praise the name of the Lord. Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time forth and forever. From the rising of the sun to its setting, the Lord's name is to be praised. High above all nations is the Lord; above the heavens is His glory. Who is like the Lord our God, who though enthroned on high, looks down upon heaven and earth? He raises the poor man out of the dust and lifts the needy one out of the trash heap, to seat them with nobles, with the nobles of His people. He turns the barren wife into a happy mother of children. Halleluyah!

בְּצֵאת יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרַיִם, בַּיַּת יַעֲקֹב מֵעַם לֵעֵז: הַיְתָה יְהוּדָה לְקֹדֶשׁוֹ. יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמְשָׁלוֹתָיו:
הַיָּם רָאָה וַיִּנָּס, הַיַּרְדֵּן יָסַב לְאַחֲזֹר: הַהַרִים רָקְדוּ כְּאֵילִים. גְּבַעוֹת כְּבַנְי־צֹאן: מַה־לָּךְ הַיָּם כִּי תִנוֹס.
הַיַּרְדֵּן תִּסַּב לְאַחֲזֹר: הַהַרִים תִּרְקְדוּ כְּאֵילִים. גְּבַעוֹת כְּבַנְי־צֹאן: מִלִּפְנֵי אָדוֹן חוֹלֵי אָרֶץ. מִלִּפְנֵי אֱלֹהֵי
יַעֲקֹב: הַהֶפְכִי הַצּוּר אֲגַם־מַיִם. חֲלַמֵּי־שָׁמַיִם לְמַעֲיָנוֹ־מַיִם.

Psalm 114

When Israel went out of Egypt, Jacob's household from a people of strange speech, Judah became God's sanctuary, Israel His kingdom. The sea saw it and fled; the Jordan turned backward. The mountains skipped like rams, and the hills like lambs. Why is it, sea, that you flee? Why, O Jordan, do you turn backward? You mountains, why do you skip like rams? You hills, why do you leap like lambs? O earth, tremble at the Lord's presence, at the presence of the God of Jacob, who turns the rock into a pond of water, the flint into a flowing fountain.

כָּל אַחַד יִקַּח כּוֹסוֹ בִּידוֹ

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר גָּאֲלָנוּ וְגָאֵל אֶת־אֲבוֹתֵינוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם, וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְלִילָה
הַזֶּה, לְאָכְל־בֹּו מִצֶּה וּמְרוּר. כֵּן, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, יִגִּיעָנוּ לְמוֹעֲדִים וְלְרִגְלִים אַחֲרֵים, הַבָּאִים
לְקַרְאֲתָנוּ לְשָׁלוֹם. שְׂמִיחִים בְּבִגְדֵי עֵינָךְ, וְשִׂשְׁיִם בְּעִבּוֹדֶתְךָ, וְנֹאכֵל שָׁם מִן הַזִּבְחִים וּמִן הַפְּסָחִים
(בְּמוֹצָאֵי שַׁבַּת אוֹמְרִים מִן הַפְּסָחִים וּמִן הַזִּבְחִים), אֲשֶׁר יִגִּיעַ דְּמָם, עַל קִיר מִזְבֵּחַךְ לְרָצוֹן, וְנוֹדָה לָּךְ
שִׁיר חֲדָשׁ עַל גְּאֻלְתָּנוּ, וְעַל פְּדוּת נַפְשָׁנוּ: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, גָּאֵל יִשְׂרָאֵל:

We lift the cup of wine and recite

Blessed art Thou, Lord our God, King of the universe, who hast redeemed us and our fathers from Egypt and enabled us to reach this night that we may eat matzo and marror. So Lord our God and God of our fathers, enable us to reach also the forthcoming holidays and festivals in peace, rejoicing in the rebuilding of Zion thy city, and joyful at thy service. There we shall eat of the offerings and Passover sacrifices (On Saturday night read: of the Passover sacrifices and offerings) which will be acceptably placed upon thy altar. We shall sing a new hymn of praise to Thee for our redemption and for our liberation. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who hast redeemed Israel.

כוס שני

הַגְּנִי מוֹכֵן וּמְזַמֵּן לְקַיֵּם מִצְוֹת פֶּסַח וְשִׁנְיָהּ מֵאַרְבַּע פִּסּוּת לְשֵׁם יְחִוּד קוּדְשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא וְשִׁכְנֵתִיָּה
עַל-יְדֵי הַהוּא טָמִיר וְנִעְלָם בְּשֵׁם כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן:

Over the second cup of wine, one recites:

Praise to You, Adonai, our God, Sovereign of the Universe
Who creates the fruit of the vine.

Step 6: Wash the hands for the meal

רְחִיצָה

נוטלים ידים ומברכים:

**בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו,
וְצִוָּנוּ עַל נְטִילַת יָדַיִם:**

Praise to You, Adonai, our God, Sovereign of the Universe
who sanctifies us with Your commandments,
and commanded us concerning the washing of the hands.

Step 7: Blessings over the matzo

מוֹצִיא. מִצָּה

נוטל את המצות שעל הקערה ומברך

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הַמוֹצִיא לָהֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ:

מניח את המצה התחתונה ובעודו אווז את העליונה ואת הפרוסה מברך

**בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו
וְצִוָּנוּ עַל אֲכִילַת מִצָּה:**

We take the all three pieces of Matzah for the blessings, lift them up and recite:

Praise to You, Adonai, our God, Sovereign of the Universe who brings forth bread from the earth.

Then we lay down the bottom piece of Matzah and recite the second blessing:

Praise to You, Adonai, our God, Sovereign of the Universe who sanctifies us with Your commandments, and commanded us concerning the eating of matzo.

Step 8: Bitter herbs dipped in Charoseth

מָרוֹר

לוחק כזית מרור, טובלו בחרוסת ומברך ואוכלו

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו
וְצִוָּנוּ עַל אֲכִילַת מָרוֹר:

Praise to You, Adonai, our God, Sovereign of the Universe who sanctifies us with Your commandments, and commanded us concerning the eating of the bitter herbs.

Step 9: Marror and matzo sandwich

פּוּרְךָ

פורס כזית מהמצה השלישית וכזית מרור, טובלו בחרוסת, כורכים יחד ואוכלם בהסיבה ואומר

זָכַר לְמִקְדָּשׁ כְּהִלֵּל: כִּן עָשָׂה הַלֵּל בְּזִמְן שְׁבִית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ הָיָה קָיָם
הָיָה פּוּרְךָ פֶּסַח מִצָּה וּמָרוֹר וְאוֹכֵל בְּיַחַד.
לְקַיֵּם מָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר:
עַל מִצְוֹת וּמְרוֹרִים י' אֲכַלְהוּ:

We make a sandwich with the third piece of Matzah and an portion of Maror dipped in the Haroset

To remind us of the Temple we do as Hillel did in Temple times;
he combined matzo and marror in a sandwich and ate them
together, to fulfill what is written in the Torah:
"They shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs."

Step 10: Serve the meal

שִׁלְחַן עֹרֵךְ

Step 11: Partaking of the Afikoman

צָפוּן

אוכלים את האפיקומן

Step 12: Grace after meals

בְּרַךְ

Psalm 126

שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת בְּשׁוּב יְיָ אֶת שִׁיבַת צִיּוֹן הָיִינוּ כְּחֹלְמִים: אֲזַי יִמְלֵא שְׂחֹק פִּינוּ וּלְשׁוֹנֵנוּ רִנָּה אֲזַי
 יֹאמְרוּ בְּגוֹיִם הַגְּדִיל יְיָ לַעֲשׂוֹת עִם אֱלֹהֵי: הַגְּדִיל יְיָ לַעֲשׂוֹת עִמָּנוּ הָיִינוּ שְׂמֵחִים: שׁוּבָה יְיָ אֶת
 שְׁבִיתָנוּ כַּאֲפִיקוֹם בְּנֶגֶב: הַזְרְעִים בְּדַמְעָה בְּרִנָּה יִקְצְרוּ: הַלֹּדֶף יִלְדֵף וּבִכְהָ נִשְׂא מִשָּׁדֶף הַזְרַע
 בָּא יבֹא בְרִנָּה נִשְׂא אֶלְמֵתָיו:

הַמְזֻמָּן: חֲבֵרֵי נְבֻרָךְ! הַמְזֻמָּן: חֲבֵרֵי נְבֻרָךְ!

הַמְסוּבִין: יְהִי שֵׁם יְיָ מְבֹרָךְ מֵעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם.

הַמְזֻמָּן: יְהִי שֵׁם יְיָ מְבֹרָךְ מֵעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם.

בְּרִשׁוֹת חֲבֵרֵי, נְבֻרָךְ (אֱלֹהֵינוּ) שְׂאֲכָלְנוּ מִשְׁלוֹ.

הַמְסוּבִין: בְּרוּךְ (אֱלֹהֵינוּ) שְׂאֲכָלְנוּ מִשְׁלוֹ וּבִטְוֵבוֹ חָיִינוּ.

הַמְזֻמָּן: בְּרוּךְ (אֱלֹהֵינוּ) שְׂאֲכָלְנוּ מִשְׁלוֹ וּבִטְוֵבוֹ חָיִינוּ.

בְּרוּךְ הוּא וּבְרוּךְ שְׁמוֹ: בְּרוּךְ הוּא וּבְרוּךְ שְׁמוֹ:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מְלֶכֶד הָעוֹלָם, הֵזַן אֶת הָעוֹלָם כֻּלּוֹ בְּטוֹבוֹ בְּחֵן

בְּחֶסֶד וּבְרַחֲמִים הוּא נוֹתֵן לָחֶם לְכֹל בֶּשֶׂר כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶד. וּבְטוֹבוֹ

הַגְּדוֹל תָּמִיד לֹא חָסַר לָנוּ, וְאֵל יַחְסַר לָנוּ מִזֹּן לְעוֹלָם וָעַד. בְּעִבּוֹר שְׁמוֹ

הַגְּדוֹל, כִּי הוּא אֵל זֶן וּמְפַרֵּס לְכֹל וּמְטִיב לְכֹל, וּמְכִין מִזֹּן לְכֹל בְּרִיּוֹתָיו

אֲשֶׁר בָּרָא. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, הֵזַן אֶת הַכֹּל:

Praised are you, Adonai, sovereign of the universe who nourishes the whole world with grace, kindness and mercy. You give food to all creatures, for thy kindness endures forever. Through this great goodness we have never been in want; may we never be in want of sustenance for His great name's sake. God is the one who sustain all, who is beneficent to all, and provides food for all the creatures which He has created. Praised are You, O Lord, who sustains all.

נודה לך יי אלהינו על שהנחלת לאבותינו, ארץ חמדה טובה ורחבה, ועל שהוצאתנו יי אלהינו מארץ מצרים, ופדיתנו, מבית עבדים, ועל ברייתך שחתמת בבשרנו, ועל תורתך שלמדנו, ועל חקיך שהודעתנו ועל חיים חן וחסד שחוננתנו, ועל אכילת מזון שאתה זו ומפרנס אותנו תמיד, בכל יום ובכל עת ובכל שעה:

ועל הכל יי אלהינו אנחנו מודים לך, ומברכים אותך, ותברך שמך בפי כל חי תמיד לעולם ועד. כפתוב, ואכלת ושבעת, וברכת את יי אלהיך על הארץ הטובה אשר נתן לך. ברוך אתה יי, על הארץ ועל המזון:

For everything, Lord our God, we thank You and bless You. May your name constantly be blessed by all forever, as it is written: "After you have eaten and are satisfied, you shall bless the Lord your God for the good land He has given you." Praise to you, Adonai, for the land and the food.

רחם נא יי אלהינו, על ישראל עמך, ועל ירושלים עירך, ועל ציון משכן כבודך, ועל מלכות בית דוד משיחך, ועל הבית הגדול והקדוש שנקרא שמך עליו. אלהינו, אבינו, רענו, זוננו, פרנסנו, וכלכלנו, והרויחנו, והרוח לנו יי אלהינו מהרה מכל צרותינו, ונא, אל תצריכנו יי אלהינו, לא לידי מתנת בשר ודם, ולא לידי הלואתם. כי אם לך המלאה, הפתוחה, הקדושה והרחבה, שלא יבוש ולא נפלים לעולם ועד:

לשבת רצה והחליצנו יי אלהינו במצותך ובמצות יום השביעי השבת הגדול והקדוש הזה. כי יום זה גדול וקדוש הוא לפניך, לשבת בו ולנוח בו באהבה כמצות רצונך וברצונך הניח לנו יי אלהינו, שלא תהא צרה ויגון ואנחה ביום מנוחתנו. והראנו יי אלהינו בנחמת ציון עירך, ובבנין ירושלים עיר קדשך, כי אתה הוא בעל הישועות ובעל הנחמות:

אלהינו ואלהי אבותינו, יעלה ויבא ויגיע, ויראה, וירצה, וישמע, ויפקד, ויזכר זכרוננו ופקדוננו, וזכרון אבותינו, וזכרון משיח בן דוד עבדך, וזכרון ירושלים עיר קדשך, וזכרון כל עמך בית ישראל לפניך, לפליטה לטובה לחן ולחסד ולרחמים, לחיים ולשלום ביום חג המצות הזה. זכרנו יי אלהינו בו לטובה. ופקדנו בו לברכה. והושיענו בו לחיים, ובדבר ישועה ורחמים, חוס וחסנו, ורחם עלינו והושיענו, כי אליך עינינו, כי אל מלך חנון ורחום אתה:

ובנה ירושלים עיר הקדש במהרה בימינו. ברוך אתה יי, בונה ברחמי ירושלים. אמן

Rebuild Jerusalem the holy city speedily in our days.
Praise to You, Adonai, who will rebuild Jerusalem in mercy. Amen.

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם, האל אבינו, מלכנו, אדירנו בוראנו, גואלנו, יוצרנו, קדושנו קדוש יעקב, רוענו רועה ישראל. המלך הטוב, והמטיב לכל, שבכל יום ויום הוא הטיב, הוא מטיב, הוא ייטיב לנו. הוא גמלנו, הוא גומלנו, הוא יגמלנו לעד לחן ולחסד ולרחמים ולרחוץ הצלה והצלחה ברכה וישועה, נחמה, פרנסה וכלכלה, ורחמים, וחיים ושלום, וכל טוב, ומכל טוב לעולם אל יחסרנו:

הַרְחֵמֵנוּ, הוּא יִמְלֹךְ עָלֵינוּ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.
הַרְחֵמֵנוּ, הוּא יִתְבָּרַךְ בְּשֵׁמִים וּבְאַרְצֵי.
הַרְחֵמֵנוּ, הוּא יִשְׁתַּבַּח לְדוֹר דּוֹרִים, וַיִּתְפָּאֵר בְּנוֹ לְעֵד וּלְנֹצֵחַ נְצָחִים, וַיִּתְהַדָּר בְּנוֹ לְעֵד וּלְעוֹלָמֵי
עוֹלָמִים.

הַרְחֵמֵנוּ, הוּא יִפְרִיֶנְסֵנוּ בְּכָבוֹד.
הַרְחֵמֵנוּ, הוּא יִשְׁבּוֹר עָלֵנוּ מֵעַל צָנְאָרְנוּ וְהוּא יוֹלִיכֵנוּ קוֹמְמִיּוֹת לְאַרְצֵנוּ.
הַרְחֵמֵנוּ, הוּא יִשְׁלַח לָנוּ בְּרָכָה מְרֻבָּה בְּבֵית הַזֶּה, וְעַל שְׁלַחַן זֶה שְׂאֻכְלָנוּ עִלְיוֹ.
הַרְחֵמֵנוּ, הוּא יִשְׁלַח לָנוּ אֶת אֱלֹהֵינוּ הַנְּבִיא זְכוֹר לְטוֹב, וַיְבַשֵּׁר לָנוּ בְּשׁוֹרֹת טוֹבוֹת יְשׁוּעוֹת
וְנַחֲמוֹת.

הַרְחֵמֵנוּ, הוּא יִבְרַךְ אֶת (אָבִי מוֹרִי) בְּעַל הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה, וְאֶת (אִמִּי מוֹרֵתִי) בְּעַלֵּת הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה,

הַרְחֵמֵנוּ, הוּא יִבְרַךְ אוֹתִי (וְאָבִי וְאִמִּי וְאִשְׁתִּי וְזֵרְעִי וְאֶת כָּל אֲשֶׁר לִי)

הַרְחֵמֵנוּ, הוּא יִבְרַךְ אֶת בְּעַל הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה, וְאֶת אִשְׁתּוֹ בְּעַלֵּת הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה.

אוֹתָם וְאֶת בֵּיתָם וְאֶת זֵרְעָם וְאֶת כָּל אֲשֶׁר לָהֶם אוֹתָנוּ וְאֶת כָּל אֲשֶׁר לָנוּ, כְּמוֹ שְׁנֵתְבָרְכוּ
אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, אַבְרָהָם יִצְחָק וַיַּעֲקֹב: בְּכָל, מְכָל, כָּל. כֵּן יִבְרַךְ אוֹתָנוּ כְּלָנוּ יַחַד. בְּבְרָכָה שְׁלֵמָה, וְנֹאמַר
אָמֵן:

בְּמָרוֹם יִלְמְדוּ עֲלֵיהֶם וְעָלֵינוּ זְכוֹת, שֶׁתִּהְיֶה לְמַשְׁמֶרֶת שְׁלוֹם, וְנִשְׂא בְרָכָה מֵאֵת יְיָ וְצִדְקָה מֵאֱלֹהֵי
יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְנִמְצָא חַן וְשִׂכָּל טוֹב בְּעֵינֵי אֱלֹהִים וְאָדָם:

לשבת הַרְחֵמֵנוּ, הוּא יִנְחִילָנוּ יוֹם שְׁכָלוֹ שֶׁבֶת וּמְנוּחָה לְחַיֵּי הָעוֹלָמִים.

הַרְחֵמֵנוּ, הוּא יִנְחִילָנוּ יוֹם שְׁכָלוֹ טוֹב.

הַרְחֵמֵנוּ, הוּא יִזְכֵּנוּ לַיְמֵי הַמְּשִׁיחַ וְלַחַיֵּי הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא.
מְגִדוֹל יְשׁוּעוֹת מְלָכוֹ, וְעֲשֵׂה חֶסֶד לְמַשִּׁיחוֹ לְדוֹד וּלְזֵרְעוֹ עַד עוֹלָם: עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמָרוֹמָיו,
הוּא יַעֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם, עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן:

May the Merciful One enable us to live in the days of the Messiah and in the world to come. He is the
tower of salvation of His chosen king and shows kindness to His anointed prince, to David and his
descendents forever. May the One who creates peace in His heavenly heights, grant peace for us and for
all Israel; and say, Amen.

יִרְאוּ אֶת יְיָ קְדוֹשׁוֹ, כִּי אֵין מַחְסוֹר לִירְאָיו: כְּפִירִים רָשׁוּ וְרָעִבוּ, וְדוֹרְשֵׁי יְיָ לֹא יִחְסְרוּ כָּל טוֹב: הוֹדוּ
לְיְיָ כִּי טוֹב, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶד: פּוֹתַח אֶת יַדְךָ, וּמַשְׁבִּיעַ לְכָל חַי רְצוֹן: בְּרוּךְ הַגִּבּוֹר אֲשֶׁר יִבְטַח בְּיְיָ,
וְהָיָה יְיָ מְבֹטָחוֹ: נַעַר הָיִיתִי גַם זְקֵנִתִי וְלֹא רָאִיתִי צָדִיק נֶעְזֵב, וְזָרְעוֹ מְבַקֵּשׁ לָחֵם: יְיָ עֲזוּ לְעַמּוֹ יִתְּנוּ, יְיָ
יְבָרֵךְ אֶת עַמּוֹ בְּשְׁלוֹם:

כוס שלישית

The third cup of wine

הִנְנִי מוֹכֵן וּמְזַמֵּן לְקִיּוֹם מִצְוַת כּוֹס שְׁלִישִׁית מֵאַרְבַּע כּוֹסוֹת לְשֵׁם
יְחִוּד קוֹדֶשׁ אֱלֹהֵינוּ הוּא וְשִׁכְנֵתוֹ עַל-יְדֵי הַהוּא טָמִיר וְנַעֲלָם
בְּשֵׁם כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל.

Behold I am prepared to fulfill the Mitzvah of drinking the first of the four cups of wine in order to unify the Holy One of Blessing and His Divine Presence in the name of the entire Jewish People. We drink this cup as we remember God's first promise, "I will redeem you with outstretched hands and with great judgments."

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרָא פְּרִי הַגֶּפֶן:

We open the door of our home as we recite the following words. Some people follow the Hasidic custom of passing the Cup of Elijah around the table, allowing each person to pour a little of their wine into it. In this way we symbolically show that each of us has a role to play in bringing redemption to the world.

שִׁפְךָ חֲמַתְךָ אֶל-הַגּוֹיִם, אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִדְעוּךָ וְעַל-מַמְלָכוֹת אֲשֶׁר בְּשִׁמְךָ
לֹא קָרְאוּ: כִּי אָכַל אֶת-יַעֲקֹב. וְאֶת-נְוֵהוּ הִשְׁמֹו: שִׁפְךָ-עֲלֵיהֶם זַעֲמֶךָ,
וְחָרוֹן אַפֶּךָ יִשִּׁיגֵם: תִּרְדֹּף בְּאֵף וְתִשְׁמִידֵם, מִתַּחַת שָׁמַי יי:

**Pour out Your wrath on the nations who do not know you,
and upon the kingdoms that do not call upon your name.
For they devoured Jacob and his habitation they laid waste.
Pour out your wrath upon them
and let your burning anger overtake them.
Pursue them with anger and
destroy them beneath the heavens of Adonai.**

Step 13: Hallel

הַלֵּל

לֹא לָנוּ יי לֹא לָנוּ כִּי לְשִׁמְךָ תָּנוּ כְּבוֹד, עַל חֲסִדֶּךָ עַל אֲמִתְּךָ. לָמָּה
יֹאמְרוּ הַגּוֹיִם, אֵיךְ נָא אֱלֹהֵיהֶם. וְאֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּשִׁמְיִם כָּל אֲשֶׁר חָפַץ
עָשָׂה. עֲצִבְיָהֶם כְּסָף וְזָהָב, מַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵי אָדָם. פֶּה לָהֶם וְלֹא יִדְבְּרוּ,
עֵינַיִם לָהֶם וְלֹא יִרְאוּ. אֲזַנָּיִם לָהֶם וְלֹא יִשְׁמְעוּ, אֵף לָהֶם וְלֹא
יִרְיִחוּ. יְדֵיהֶם וְלֹא יִמְיִשוּן, רַגְלֵיהֶם וְלֹא יִהַלְכוּ, לֹא יִהְיוּ בְּגָרוֹן.
כְּמוֹתֵם יִהְיוּ עֲשִׂיָהֶם, כָּל אֲשֶׁר בִּטְחָ בָהֶם: יִשְׂרָאֵל בִּטְחָ בַּי, עֲזָרָם
וּמְגַנָּם הוּא. בֵּית אֲהֲרֹן בִּטְחוּ בַּי, עֲזָרָם וּמְגַנָּם הוּא. יִרְאֵי יי בִּטְחוּ
בַּי, עֲזָרָם וּמְגַנָּם הוּא:

Psalm 115:1-11

Nor for our sake, O Lord, not for our sake, but for thy name's sake give glory, because of thy kindness and thy truth. Why should the nations say: "Where is their God?" Our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases! Their idols are silver and gold, the work of human hands. They have a mouth, but they cannot speak; they have eyes, but they cannot see; they have ears, but they cannot hear; they have a nose, but they cannot smell; they have hands, but they cannot feel; they have feet, but they cannot walk; nor can they utter a sound with their throat. Those who make them shall become like them, whoever trusts in them. O Israel, trust in the Lord! He is their help and shield. You who revere the Lord, trust in the Lord! He is their help and shield.

יְיָ זָכְרָנוּ יְבָרֵךְ, יְבָרֵךְ אֶת בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל, יְבָרֵךְ אֶת בֵּית אַהֲרֹן. יְבָרֵךְ
 יְרֵאֵי יְיָ, הַקְּטָנִים עִם הַגְּדֹלִים. יוֹסֵף יְיָ עֲלֵיכֶם, עֲלֵיכֶם וְעַל בְּנֵיכֶם.
 בְּרוּכִים אַתֶּם לַיְיָ, עֲשֵׂה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ. הַשָּׁמַיִם שָׁמַיִם לַיְיָ, וְהָאָרֶץ
 נָתַן לַבְּנֵי אָדָם. לֹא הַמֵּתִים יְהַלְלוּ יְהוָה, וְלֹא כָּל יְרֵדֵי דוּמָה. וְאַנְחָנוּ
 נְבָרֵךְ יְהוָה, מֵעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם, הַלְלוּיָהּ:

Psalm 115:12-18

The Lord who has remembered us will bless; He will bless the house of Israel; He will bless the house of Aaron; He will bless those who revere the Lord, the small with the great. May the Lord increase you, you and your children. You are blessed by the Lord, who made the heaven and earth. The heaven is the Lord's heaven, but He has given the earth to mankind. The dead cannot praise the Lord, nor can any who go down into silence. We will bless the Lord from this time forth and forever. Halleluyah!

אֶהְבֵּתִי כִּי יִשְׁמַע יְיָ, אֶת קוֹלִי תַחֲנוּנֵי. כִּי הִטָּה אָזְנוֹ לִי וּבִימִי
 אֶקְרָא: אֶפְפוּנֵי חֲבַלֵי מוֹת, וּמִצָּרֵי שְׂאוּל מִצְאוּנֵי צָרָה וַיְגוּן אֶמְצָא.
 וּבִשְׁם יְיָ אֶקְרָא, אָנָּה יְיָ מַלְטָה נַפְשִׁי. חֲנוּן יְיָ וְצַדִּיק, וְאֱלֹהֵינוּ
 מִרְחָם. שִׁמְר פְּתָאִים יְיָ דְלוֹתַי וְלִי יְהוֹשִׁיעַ. שׁוּבֵי נַפְשִׁי לְמִנוּחֵיכֶי,
 כִּי יְיָ גָמַל עָלַיכֶי. כִּי חִלְצַתָּ נַפְשִׁי מִמָּוֶת אֶת עֵינַי מִן דִּמְעָה, אֶת
 רַגְלֵי מִדְּחִי אֶתְהַלֵּךְ לִפְנֵי יְיָ, בְּאַרְצוֹת הַחַיִּים. הֶאֱמַנְתִּי כִּי אֲדַבֵּר,
 אֲנִי עָנִיתִי מְאֹד. אֲנִי אֶמְרָתִי בַחֲפָזִי כָּל הָאָדָם כֹּזֵב.

Psalm 116:1-11

I love that the Lord hears my supplications. Because He has inclined His ear to me, I will call upon Him as long as I live. The cords of death encircled me; the pains of the grave have overtaken me; I found trouble and sorrow. Then I called upon the name of the Lord: "O Lord, save my life!" Gracious is the Lord, and righteous and our God is merciful. The Lord protects the simple; I was brought low and He saved me. Return to thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord has been kind to you. Thou hast delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears and my feet from stumbling. I shall walk before the Lord in the lands of the living. I kept faith even when I cry out: "I am greatly afflicted." [I kept faith even when] I said in haste: "All men are deceitful."

מָה אֲשִׁיב לַיְיָ, כָּל תַּגְּמוּלוֹהִי עָלַי. כּוֹס יְשׁוּעוֹת אֶשָּׂא, וּבִשְׁם יְיָ
 אֶקְרָא. נִדְרֵי לַיְיָ אֲשַׁלֵּם, נִגְדָה נָא לְכָל עַמּוֹ. יִקָּר בְּעֵינַי יְיָ הַמּוֹתָה
 לְחַסִּידָיו. אָנָּה יְיָ כִּי אֲנִי עֲבָדָךְ אֲנִי עֲבָדָךְ, בֶּן אֶמְתָּךְ פִּתְחַתָּ
 לְמוֹסְרֵי. לֵךְ אֲזַבַּח זֶבַח תּוֹדָה וּבִשְׁם יְיָ אֶקְרָא. נִדְרֵי לַיְיָ אֲשַׁלֵּם
 נִגְדָה נָא לְכָל עַמּוֹ. בַּחֲצֵרוֹת בֵּית יְיָ בְּתוֹכְכִי יְרוּשָׁלַיִם הַלְלוּיָהּ.

Psalm 116:12-19

How can I repay the Lord for all His kind acts toward me? I will raise the cup of salvations, and call upon the name of the Lord. My vows to the Lord I will pay in the presence of all His people. Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His pious followers. Please, O Lord, I am truly thy servant; I am thy servant, the son of thy handmaid; Thou has loosened my bonds. To Thee I sacrifice a thanksgiving offering, and call upon the name of the Lord. My vows to the Lord I will pay in the presence of all His people, in the courts of the Lord's house, in the midst of Jerusalem. Halleluyah!

הִלְלוּ אֶת יְיָ, כָּל גּוֹיִם, שִׁבְחוּהוּ כָּל הָאֲמִים. כִּי גָבַר עָלֵינוּ חַסְדּוֹ,
וְאָמַת יְיָ לְעוֹלָם הַלְלוּיָהּ:

Psalm 117

Give thanks to the Lord, all you nations; praise Him, all you peoples!
For His kindness overwhelms us, and the truth of the Lord is forever, Halleluyah!

הוֹדוּ לַיהוָה כִּי טוֹב, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חַסְדּוֹ:
יֹאמְרוּ נָא יִשְׂרָאֵל, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חַסְדּוֹ:
יֹאמְרוּ נָא בֵּית אֶהְרֹן, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חַסְדּוֹ:
יֹאמְרוּ נָא יְרֵאֵי יְיָ, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חַסְדּוֹ:

Psalm 118:1-4

Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; His kindness endures forever.
Let Israel say: His kindness endures forever.
Let the house of Aaron say: His kindness endures forever.
Let those who revere the Lord say: His kindness endures forever.

מִן הַמִּצַּר קָרָאתִי יְהוָה, עֲנֵנִי בַמֶּרְחָב יְהוָה. יְיָ לִי לֹא אֵינְרָא, מִה יַעֲשֶׂה לִי אֲדָם. יְיָ לִי בַעֲזָרִי, וְאֲנִי אֶרְאֶה בְשִׁנְאִי. טוֹב לַחֲסוֹת בַּיהוָה, מִבְּטַח בְּאֲדָם. טוֹב לַחֲסוֹת בַּיהוָה מִבְּטַח בַּבְּנֵי אָדָם. כָּל גּוֹיִם סָבְבוּנִי בְשֵׁם יְיָ כִּי אֲמִילָם. סָבְבוּנִי גַם סָבְבוּנִי בְשֵׁם יְיָ כִּי אֲמִילָם. סָבְבוּנִי כַדְבָרִים דַּעְכוּ כְּאֵשׁ קוֹצִים, בְּשֵׁם יְיָ כִּי אֲמִילָם. דָּחָה דְחִיתַנִּי לְנֶפֶל, וַיִּי עֲזָרְנִי. עָזִי וְזִמְרַת יְהוָה, וַיְהִי לִי לִישׁוּעָה. קוֹל רִנָּה וִישׁוּעָה בְּאֶהְלִי צַדִּיקִים, יָמִין יְיָ עֲשֶׂה חַיִל. יָמִין יְיָ רֹמְמָה, יָמִין יְיָ עֲשֶׂה חַיִל. לֹא אָמוֹת כִּי אֶחְיֶה, וְאֶסַּפֵּר מַעֲשֵׂי יְהוָה. יִסֹּר יִסְרֵנִי יְהוָה, וְלִמְנוֹת לֹא נִתְּנָנִי פִתְחוּ לִי שַׁעֲרֵי צֶדֶק, אֲבֹא בָם אוֹדֶה יְהוָה. זֶה הַשַּׁעַר לַיהוָה, צַדִּיקִים יִבְאוּ בוֹ. אוֹדֶה כִּי עֲנִיתַנִּי, וַתְּהִי לִי לִישׁוּעָה. אוֹדֶה כִּי עֲנִיתַנִּי וַתְּהִי לִי לִישׁוּעָה. אֲבֹן מָאֲסוּ הַבּוֹנִים, הִיתָה לְרֹאשׁ פְּנֵה. אֲבֹן מָאֲסוּ הַבּוֹנִים, הִיתָה לְרֹאשׁ פְּנֵה. מֵאֵת יְיָ הִיתָה זֹאת, הִיא נִפְלְאֹת בְּעֵינֵינוּ: מֵאֵת יְיָ הִיתָה זֹאת, הִיא נִפְלְאֹת בְּעֵינֵינוּ. זֶה הַיּוֹם עֲשֶׂה יְיָ, נְגִילָה וְנִשְׂמָחָה בוֹ. זֶה הַיּוֹם עֲשֶׂה יְיָ, נְגִילָה וְנִשְׂמָחָה בוֹ.

Psalm 118:5-29

From the narrows I called upon the Lord; the Lord answered me by placing me in a great expanse. The Lord is with me; I have no fear of what man can do to me. The Lord is with me among my helpers; I shall see the defeat of my foes. It is better to seek refuge in the Lord than to trust in man. It is better to seek refuge in the Lord than to trust in princes. All nations have encompassed me; but in the name of the Lord, I routed them. They swarmed around me; but in the name of the Lord, I cut them down. They swarmed like bees about me, but they were extinguished like a fire of thorns; but in the name of the Lord, I cut them down. You pushed me that I might fall, but the Lord helped me. The Lord is my strength and song; He has become my salvation. The voice of rejoicing and salvation is heard in the tents of the righteous: "The right hand of the Lord does valiantly. The Lord's right hand is raised in triumph; the Lord's right hand does valiantly!" I shall not die, but live to relate the deeds of the Lord. The Lord has surely punished me, but He has not left me to die. Open for me the gates of righteousness, that I may enter and praise the Lord.

This is the gate of the Lord; the righteous may enter through it.

Each verse is recited twice:

אֹדֶךָ כִּי עֲנִיתָנִי, וַתְּהִי לִי לִישׁוּעָה.
אֶבֶן מְאֻסוֹ הַבּוֹנִים, הִיְתָה לְרֹאשׁ פֶּנֶה.
מֵאֵת יְיָ הִיְתָה זֹאת, הִיא נִפְלְאֵת בְּעֵינֵינוּ:
זֶה הַיּוֹם עָשָׂה זֶה הַיּוֹם עָשָׂה

I thank Thee for Thou has answered me
and have become my salvation.
The stone which the builders rejected
has become the major cornerstone.

This the Lord's doing;
It is marvelous in our eyes.
This is the day which the Lord has made;
We will be glad and rejoice on it.

אָנָּה יְיָ הוֹשִׁיעָה נָּא:
אָנָּה יְיָ הוֹשִׁיעָה נָּא:
אָנָּה יְיָ הַצְּלִיחָה נָּא:
אָנָּה יְיָ הַצְּלִיחָה נָּא:

O Lord, please save us! O Lord, please save us!
O Lord, let us prosper! O Lord, let us prosper!

בְּרוּךְ הָבָא בְּשֵׁם יְיָ, בְּרוּךְ הָבָא בְּשֵׁם יְיָ,
בְּרוּךְ הָבָא בְּשֵׁם יְיָ, אֵל יְיָ וַיִּצַּח לָנוּ, אֲסָרוּ חַג בְּעֵבְתֵינוּ עַד קְרֻנוֹת
הַמְּזִבֵּחַ. אֵל יְיָ וַיִּצַּח לָנוּ, אֲסָרוּ חַג בְּעֵבְתֵינוּ, עַד קְרֻנוֹת הַמְּזִבֵּחַ.
אֵלֵינוּ אֲתָה וְאֹדֶךָ אֱלֹהֵי אֲרוֹמְמֶךָ. אֵלֵינוּ אֲתָה וְאֹדֶךָ אֱלֹהֵי אֲרוֹמְמֶךָ:
הוֹדוּ לַיְיָ כִּי טוֹב, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ; הוֹדוּ לַיְיָ כִּי טוֹב, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ.

Psalm 136

הודו לַיּוּ כִּי טוֹב, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדֹ: הוֹדוּ לֵאלֹהֵי הַאֱלֹהִים, כִּי
 לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדֹ: הוֹדוּ לְאֱדֹנֵי הָאֲדֹנִים, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדֹ: לְעֵשָׂה
 נִפְלְאוֹת גְּדֹלוֹת לְבָדוֹ, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדֹ: לְעֵשָׂה הַשָּׁמַיִם בְּתַבְנוּנָה, כִּי
 לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדֹ: לְרוֹקַע הָאָרֶץ עַל הַמַּיִם, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדֹ: לְעֵשָׂה
 אוֹרִים גְּדֹלִים, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדֹ: אֶת הַשָּׁמַשׁ לְמַמְשָׁלֶת בַּיּוֹם, כִּי
 לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדֹ: אֶת הַיָּרֵחַ וְכּוֹכָבִים לְמַמְשָׁלוֹת בַּלַּיְלָה, כִּי לְעוֹלָם
 חֲסֵדֹ: לְמַכָּה מִצְרַיִם בְּבַכּוֹרֵיהֶם, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדֹ: וַיּוֹצֵא יִשְׂרָאֵל
 מִתּוֹכָם, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדֹ: בְּיַד חֲזָקָה וּבְזֵרוּעַ נְטוּיָה, כִּי לְעוֹלָם
 חֲסֵדֹ: לְגַזֵּר יַם סוּף לְגִזְרִים, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדֹ: וְהַעֲבִיר יִשְׂרָאֵל
 בְּתוֹכוֹ, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדֹ: וְנָעַר פְּרָעָה וְחִילוֹ בַיָּם סוּף, כִּי לְעוֹלָם
 חֲסֵדֹ: לְמוֹלִיד עַמּוֹ בַּמִּדְבָּר, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדֹ: לְמַכָּה מְלָכִים
 גְּדֹלִים, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדֹ: וַיַּהַרְג מְלָכִים אֲדִירִים, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדֹ:
 לְסִיחוֹן מֶלֶךְ הָאֱמֹרִי, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדֹ: וּלְעוֹג מֶלֶךְ הַבָּשָׁן, כִּי
 לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדֹ: וַנָּתַן אֶרֶץ לְנַחֲלָה, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדֹ: נַחֲלָה
 לְיִשְׂרָאֵל עֶבְדּוֹ, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדֹ: שֶׁבַשְׁפִּלְנוּ זָכַר לָנוּ, כִּי לְעוֹלָם
 חֲסֵדֹ: וַיַּפְרֶקֵנוּ מִצְרַיִנוּ, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדֹ: נוֹתַן לָחֵם לְכֹל בֶּשֶׂר, כִּי
 לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדֹ: הוֹדוּ לְאֵל הַשָּׁמַיִם, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסֵדֹ:

Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, His kindness endures forever;
 Give thanks to the God above gods, His kindness endures forever;
 Give thanks to the Lord of lords, His kindness endures forever;
 To Him who alone does great wonders, His kindness endures forever;
 To Him who made the heavens with understanding, His kindness endures forever;
 To Him who stretched the earth over the waters, His kindness endures forever;
 To Him who made the great lights, His kindness endures forever;
 The sun to reign by day, His kindness endures forever;
 The moon and the stars to reign by night, His kindness endures forever;
 To Him who smote Egypt in their firstborn, His kindness endures forever;
 And took Israel out from among them, His kindness endures forever;
 With strong hand and outstretched arm, His kindness endures forever;
 To him who parted the Red Sea, His kindness endures forever;
 And caused Israel to pass through it, His kindness endures forever;
 And threw Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea, His kindness endures forever;
 To Him who led His people through the wilderness, His kindness endures forever;
 To Him who smote great kings, His kindness endures forever;
 And slew mighty kings, His kindness endures forever;
 Sihon, king of the Amorites, His kindness endures forever;
 And Og, king of Bashan, His kindness endures forever;
 And gave their land as an inheritance, His kindness endures forever;
 An inheritance to Israel His servant, His kindness endures forever;
 Who remembered us in our low state, His kindness endures forever;
 And released us from our foes, His kindness endures forever;
 Who gives food to all creatures, His kindness endures forever;
 Give thanks to God of all heaven, His kindness endures forever.

Nishmat Kol Chai - The Breath of all Life

נשמת כל חי, תברך את שמך יי אלהינו. ורוח כל בשר, תפאר ותרום זכרך מלכנו תמיד, מן העולם ועד העולם אתה אל. ומבלעדיך אין לנו מלך גואל ומושיע, פודה ומציל ומפריס ומרחם, בכל עת צרה וצוקה. אין לנו מלך אלא אתה: אלהי הראשונים והאחרונים, אלוה כל בריות, אדון כל תולדות, המהלך ברב התשבחות, המנהג עולמו בחסד, ובריותיו ברחמים. ויי לא ינום ולא יישן, המעורר ישנים והמקיץ נרדמים, והמשיח אלמים, והמתיר אסורים, והסומך נופלים, והזקף כפופים, לה לבדך אנחנו מודים. אלו פינו מלא שינה כים, ולשונו רנה כהמון גליו, ושפתותינו שבח כמרחבי רקיע, ועינינו מאירות כשמש וכינור, וידינו פרושות כנשרי שמים, ורגליו קלות כאילות, אין אנחנו מספיקים, להודות לך יי אלהינו ואלהי אבותינו, ולברך את שמך על אחת מאלף אלף אלפי אלפים ורבי רבבות פעמים, הטובות שעשית עם אבותינו ועמנו. ממצרים גאלתנו יי אלהינו, ומבית עבדים פדיתנו, ברעב זנתנו, ובשבע כלכלתנו, מחרב הצלתנו, ומדבר מלטתנו, ומחלים רעים ונאמנים דליתנו: עד הנה עזונו רחמיה, ולא עזבונו חסדיך ואל תטשנו יי אלהינו לנצח. על כן אברים שפלגת בנו, ורוח ונשמה שנפחת באפינו, ולשון אשר שמת בפינו, הן הם יודו ויברכו וישבחו ויפארו וירוממו ויעריצו ויקדישו וימליכו את שמך מלכנו, כי כל פה לך יודה, וכל לשון לך תשבע, וכל ברך לך תכרע, וכל קומה לפניך תשתחוה, וכל לבבות ייראוה, וכל קרב וכליות יזמרו לשמך. כדבר שכתוב, כל עצמותי תאמרנה יי מי כמוך. מציל עני מחזק ממנו, ועני ואביון מגזלו: מי ידמה לך, ומי ישנה לך ומי יעריך לך: האל הגדול הגבור והנורא, אל עליון קנה שמים וארץ: נהללך ונשבחך ונפאריך ונברך את שם קדשך. כאמור, לדוד, ברכי נפשי את יי, וכל קרבי את שם קדשו:

האל בתעצמות עזך, הגדול בכבוד שמך. הגבור לנצח והנורא
בנוראותיך. המלך היושב על כסא רם ונשא:

שוכן עד, מרום וקדוש שמו: וכתוב, רננו צדיקים ביי, לישרים
נאנה תהלה. בפי ישרים תתהלל. ובדברי צדיקים תתברך.
ובלשון חסידים תתרום. ובקרב קדושים תתקדש:

ובמקהלות רבבות עמך בית ישראל, ברנה יתפאר שמך מלכנו,
בכל דור ודור, שכן חובת כל היצורים, לפניה יי אלהינו, ואלהי
אבותינו, להודות להלל לשבח לפאר לרום להדר לברך לעלה
ולקלס, על כל דברי שירות ותשבחות דוד בן ישי עבדך משיחך:

יִשְׁתַּבַּח שְׁמֶךָ לְעַד מְלַכְנוּ, הָאֵל הַמֶּלֶךְ הַגָּדוֹל וְהַקְדוֹשׁ בְּשִׁמּוֹ
 וּבְאַרְצְךָ. כִּי לָךְ נָאָה, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ: שִׁיר וְשִׁבְחָה, הַלֵּל
 וְזִמְרָה, עֵז וּמִמְשָׁלָה, נִצְחָה, גְּדֻלָּה וּגְבוּרָה, תְּהִלָּה וְתִפְאַרֶת, קְדוּשָׁה
 וּמְלָכוּת. בְּרָכוֹת וְהוֹדָאוֹת מֵעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם.

יְהַלְלוּךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ כָּל מַעֲשֵׂיךָ, וְחִסְדֵיךָ צְדִיקִים עוֹשֵׂי רְצוֹנְךָ, וְכָל
 עַמֶּךָ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּרִנָּה יוֹדוּ וַיְבָרְכוּ וַיִּשְׁבְּחוּ וַיִּפְאֲרוּ וַיְרַמְמוּ
 וַיְעַרְצוּ וַיִּקְדְּשׁוּ וַיִּמְלִיכוּ אֶת שְׁמֶךָ מְלַכְנוּ, כִּי לָךְ טוֹב לְהוֹדוֹת
 וּלְשַׁמֵּךְ נָאָה לְזִמְרָה, כִּי מֵעוֹלָם וְעַד עוֹלָם אַתָּה אֵל. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ,
 מֶלֶךְ מְהֻלָּל בְּתִשְׁבָּחוֹת.

Praise be thy name forever, our King, who rules and is great and holy in heaven and on earth; for to Thee, Lord our God, it is fitting to render song and praise, *hallel* and psalms, power and dominion, victory, glory and might, praise and beauty, holiness and sovereignty, blessings and thanks, from now and forever. All thy works praise Thee, Lord our God; thy pious followers who perform thy will, and all thy people the house of Israel, praise, thank, bless, glorify, extol, exalt, revere, sanctify, and coronate thy name, our King. To Thee it is fitting to give thanks, and unto thy name it is proper to sing praises, for Thou art God eternal.

The fourth cup

הֲנִי מוֹכֵן וּמְזוּמֵן לְקַיֵּם מִצְוַת כּוֹס שְׁלִישִׁי מֵאַרְבַּע כּוֹסוֹת לְשֵׁם
 יְחִוּד קוֹדֶשׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא וְשִׁכְנִיתִיהָ עַל יְדֵי הַהוּא טָמִיר וְנִנְעֵלָם
 בְּשֵׁם כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל.

Behold I am prepared to fulfill the Mitzvah of drinking the third of the four cups of wine in order to unify the Holy One of Blessing and His Divine Presence in the name of the entire Jewish People. We drink this cup as we remember God's fourth promise, "I will take you to be my people."

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְרֵי הַגֶּפֶן:

**Praised are You Adonai Sovereign of the universe,
 who creates the fruit of the vine.**

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם עַל הַגֶּפֶן וְעַל פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן.
 וְעַל תְּנוּבַת הַשָּׂדֶה, וְעַל אֶרֶץ חֲמֻדָּה טוֹבָה וְרַחֲבָה, שְׂרָצִית וְהִנְחַלְתָּ
 לְאֲבוֹתֵינוּ, לְאֹכֹל מִפְרִיהָ וּלְשִׁבּוֹעַ מִטּוֹבָהּ. רַחֵם נָא יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ עַל
 יִשְׂרָאֵל עַמֶּךָ, וְעַל יְרוּשָׁלַיִם עִירָךָ, וְעַל צִיּוֹן מִשְׁכַּן כְּבוֹדְךָ, וְעַל
 מִזְבְּחֶךָ וְעַל הַיְכָלְךָ. וּבְנֵה יְרוּשָׁלַיִם עִיר הַקֹּדֶשׁ בְּמַהֲרָה בְּיָמֵינוּ,
 וְהַעֲלֵנוּ לְתוֹכָהּ, וְשִׁמְחָנוּ בְּבִנְיָנָהּ וְנֹאכַל מִפְרִיהָ וְנִשְׁבַּע מִטּוֹבָהּ,
 וַיְבָרְכֶךָ עָלֶיךָ בְּקֹדֶשׁה וַיְבָרְכֶךָ (בְּשַׁבַּת וּרְצָה וְהַחֲלִיצָנוּ
 בְּיוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת הַזֶּה). וְשִׁמְחָנוּ בְּיוֹם חַג הַמִּצּוֹת הַזֶּה.
 כִּי אַתָּה יְיָ טוֹב וּמְטִיב לְכָל, וְנוֹדֶה לָךְ עַל הָאֶרֶץ וְעַל פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן.
 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, עַל הָאֶרֶץ וְעַל פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן:

Blessed, art Thou, Lord our God, King of the universe, for the vine and its fruit, and for the produce of the field, for the beautiful and spacious land which Thou gave to our fathers as a heritage to eat of its fruit and to enjoy its goodness. Have mercy, Lord our God, on Israel thy people, on Jerusalem thy city, on Zion the abode of thy glory, on thy altar and thy Temple. Rebuild Jerusalem, the holy city, speedily in our days. Bring us there and cheer us with its restoration; may we eat of its fruit and enjoy of its goodness; may we bless Thee for it in holiness and purity. (On Sabbath add: Favor us and strengthen us on this Sabbath day) and grant us happiness on this Feast of Matzot; for Thou, O Lord, are good and beneficent to all, and we thank Thee for the land and the fruit of the vine. Blessed art Thou, O Lord for the land and the fruit of the vine.

Adir Bim'luchah -- Mighty in kingship

כִּי לֹו נָאָה, כִּי לֹו נָאָה.

אָדִיר בְּמְלוּכָה, בְּחֹר פְּהֻלָּה, גְּדוּדֵינוּ יֹאמְרוּ לֹו:
לֵךְ וּלְךָ, לֵךְ כִּי לֵךְ, לֵךְ אֶף לֵךְ, לֵךְ יְיָ הַמְּמַלְכָה.
כִּי לֹו נָאָה, כִּי לֹו נָאָה.

דָּגוּל בְּמְלוּכָה, הַדּוּר פְּהֻלָּה, וְתִיקוּ יֹאמְרוּ לֹו:
לֵךְ וּלְךָ, לֵךְ כִּי לֵךְ, לֵךְ אֶף לֵךְ, לֵךְ יְיָ הַמְּמַלְכָה.
כִּי לֹו נָאָה, כִּי לֹו נָאָה.

זַכָּאי בְּמְלוּכָה, חֶסֶד פְּהֻלָּה, טַפְסֵינוּ יֹאמְרוּ לֹו:
לֵךְ וּלְךָ, לֵךְ כִּי לֵךְ, לֵךְ אֶף לֵךְ, לֵךְ יְיָ הַמְּמַלְכָה.
כִּי לֹו נָאָה, כִּי לֹו נָאָה.

יַחִיד בְּמְלוּכָה, כְּבִיר פְּהֻלָּה, לְמוּדֵינוּ יֹאמְרוּ לֹו:
לֵךְ וּלְךָ, לֵךְ כִּי לֵךְ, לֵךְ אֶף לֵךְ, לֵךְ יְיָ הַמְּמַלְכָה.
כִּי לֹו נָאָה, כִּי לֹו נָאָה.

מוֹשֵׁל בְּמְלוּכָה, נוֹרָא פְּהֻלָּה, סְבִיבֵינוּ יֹאמְרוּ לֹו:
לֵךְ וּלְךָ, לֵךְ כִּי לֵךְ, לֵךְ אֶף לֵךְ, לֵךְ יְיָ הַמְּמַלְכָה.
כִּי לֹו נָאָה, כִּי לֹו נָאָה.

עָנּוּ בְּמְלוּכָה, פּוֹדֵה פְּהֻלָּה, צְדִיקֵינוּ יֹאמְרוּ לֹו:
לֵךְ וּלְךָ, לֵךְ כִּי לֵךְ, לֵךְ אֶף לֵךְ, לֵךְ יְיָ הַמְּמַלְכָה.
כִּי לֹו נָאָה, כִּי לֹו נָאָה.

קְדוֹשׁ בְּמְלוּכָה, רַחוּם פְּהֻלָּה, שְׁנֵאֲנֵינוּ יֹאמְרוּ לֹו:
לֵךְ וּלְךָ, לֵךְ כִּי לֵךְ, לֵךְ אֶף לֵךְ, לֵךְ יְיָ הַמְּמַלְכָה.
כִּי לֹו נָאָה, כִּי לֹו נָאָה.

תַּקְיֹוּ בְּמְלוּכָה, תּוֹמֵךְ פְּהֻלָּה, תַּמְיָמֵינוּ יֹאמְרוּ לֹו:
לֵךְ וּלְךָ, לֵךְ כִּי לֵךְ, לֵךְ אֶף לֵךְ, לֵךְ יְיָ הַמְּמַלְכָה.
כִּי לֹו נָאָה, כִּי לֹו נָאָה.

Powerful in kingship, truly chosen, His troops sing to Him:
 "Thine only Thine, O Lord, is the Majestic Kingdom."
 Beautiful praises are His due

Famous in kingship, truly glorious, His faithful sing to Him:
 "Thine only Thine, O Lord, is the Majestic Kingdom."
 Beautiful praises are His due

Guiltless in kingship, truly strong, His angels sing to Him:
 "Thine only Thine, O Lord, is the Majestic Kingdom."
 Beautiful praises are His due

Alone in kingship, truly powerful, His scholars sing to Him:
 "Thine only Thine, O Lord, is the Majestic Kingdom."
 Beautiful praises are His due

Commanding in kingship, truly revered, His near ones sing to Him:
 "Thine only Thine, O Lord, is the Majestic Kingdom."
 Beautiful praises are His due

Humble in kingship, truly redeeming, His righteous sing to Him:
 "Thine only Thine, O Lord, is the Majestic Kingdom."
 Beautiful praises are His due

Holy in kingship, truly merciful, His angels sing to Him:
 "Thine only Thine, O Lord, is the Majestic Kingdom."
 Beautiful praises are His due

Indomitable in kingship, truly sustaining, His innocent sing to Him:
 "Thine only Thine, O Lord, is the Majestic Kingdom."
 Beautiful praises are His due

אָדיר הוּא

Adir Hu -- Awesome is He

אָדיר הוּא, יבְנֵה בֵיתוֹ בְּקִרְוֹב, בְּמַהֲרָה בְּמַהֲרָה, בְּיָמֵינוּ בְּקִרְוֹב. אֵל
 בְּנֵה, בְּנֵה בֵיתְךָ בְּקִרְוֹב.

בְּחֹר הוּא, גְּדוֹל הוּא, דָּגוּל הוּא, יבְנֵה בֵיתוֹ בְּקִרְוֹב, בְּמַהֲרָה
 בְּמַהֲרָה, בְּיָמֵינוּ בְּקִרְוֹב. אֵל בְּנֵה, אֵל בְּנֵה, אֵל בְּנֵה בֵיתְךָ בְּקִרְוֹב.

הַדּוֹר הוּא, נְתִיק הוּא, זָכַאי הוּא, חֲסִיד הוּא, יבְנֵה בֵיתוֹ בְּקִרְוֹב,
 בְּמַהֲרָה בְּמַהֲרָה, בְּיָמֵינוּ בְּקִרְוֹב. אֵל בְּנֵה, אֵל בְּנֵה, אֵל בְּנֵה בֵיתְךָ
 בְּקִרְוֹב.

טְהוֹר הוּא, יָחִיד הוּא, כְּבִיר הוּא, לְמוֹד הוּא, מְלֻךְ הוּא, נוֹרָא הוּא,
סְגִיב הוּא, עֲזוּז הוּא, פּוֹדֵה הוּא, צְדִיק הוּא, יִבְנֶה בֵּיתוֹ בְּקֶרֶב,
בְּמַהֲרָה בְּמַהֲרָה, בְּיָמֵינוּ בְּקֶרֶב. אֵל בְּנֵה, אֵל בְּנֵה, בְּנֵה בֵּיתְךָ
בְּקֶרֶב.

קְדוֹשׁ הוּא, רַחוּם הוּא, שְׂדֵי הוּא, תְּקִיף הוּא, יִבְנֶה בֵּיתוֹ בְּקֶרֶב,
בְּמַהֲרָה בְּמַהֲרָה, בְּיָמֵינוּ בְּקֶרֶב. אֵל בְּנֵה, אֵל בְּנֵה, בְּנֵה בֵּיתְךָ
בְּקֶרֶב.

Awesome is He, May He build His temple very soon.

O God, build thy temple speedily.

Chosen is He, great, and famous; May He build.....

Glorious is He, pure and guiltless; May He build.....

Pious is He, clean and unique; May He build.....

Powerful is He, wise and majestic; May He build.....

Revered is He, eminent and strong; May He build...

Redeeming is He, righteous and holy; May He build...

Merciful is He, omnipotent, and indomitable; May He build...

Echad Mi Yodeah -- Who knows one?

אֶחָד מִי יוֹדֵעַ?

One is our God in heaven and earth.

אֶחָד מִי יוֹדֵעַ? אֶחָד אֱלֹהֵינוּ שְׁבַשְׁמַיִם וּבְאָרֶץ.

שְׁנַיִם מִי יוֹדֵעַ?

Two are the tablets of the covenant

שְׁנַיִם אֱנִי יוֹדֵעַ: שְׁנֵי לְחוֹת הַבְּרִית, אֶחָד אֱלֹהֵינוּ
שְׁבַשְׁמַיִם וּבְאָרֶץ.

שְׁלֹשָׁה מִי יוֹדֵעַ?

Three are the fathers of Israel

שְׁלֹשָׁה אֱנִי יוֹדֵעַ: שְׁלֹשָׁה אֲבוֹת, שְׁנֵי לְחוֹת הַבְּרִית,
אֶחָד אֱלֹהֵינוּ שְׁבַשְׁמַיִם וּבְאָרֶץ.

אַרְבַּע מִי יוֹדֵעַ?

Four are the mothers of Israel

לְחוֹת הַבְּרִית, אֶחָד אֱלֹהֵינוּ שְׁבַשְׁמַיִם וּבְאָרֶץ. אַרְבַּע אֱנִי יוֹדֵעַ: אַרְבַּע אִמֹּהוֹת, שְׁלֹשָׁה אֲבוֹת, שְׁנֵי

חֲמִשָּׁה מִי יוֹדֵעַ?

Five are the books of the Torah

חֲמִשָּׁה אֱנִי יוֹדֵעַ: חֲמִשָּׁה חוּמְשֵׁי תוֹרָה, אַרְבַּע
אִמֹּהוֹת, שְׁלֹשָׁה אֲבוֹת, שְׁנֵי לְחוֹת הַבְּרִית, אֶחָד אֱלֹהֵינוּ שְׁבַשְׁמַיִם
וּבְאָרֶץ.

שְׁשֶׁה מִי יוֹדֵעַ?

Six are the orders of the Mishnah

שְׁשֶׁה אֲנִי יוֹדֵעַ: שְׁשֶׁה סְדְרֵי מִשְׁנָה, חֲמִשָּׁה חוּמְשֵׁי תוֹרָה, אַרְבַּע אֲמָהוּת, שְׁלֹשָׁה אָבוֹת, שְׁנֵי לְחוֹת הַבְּרִית, אֶחָד אֱלֹהֵינוּ שְׁבַשְׁמִים וּבְאֲרָץ.

שִׁבְעָה מִי יוֹדֵעַ?

Seven are the days of the week

שִׁבְעָה אֲנִי יוֹדֵעַ: שִׁבְעָה יָמֵי שַׁבָּתָא, שְׁשֶׁה סְדְרֵי מִשְׁנָה, חֲמִשָּׁה חוּמְשֵׁי תוֹרָה, אַרְבַּע אֲמָהוּת, שְׁלֹשָׁה אָבוֹת, שְׁנֵי לְחוֹת הַבְּרִית, אֶחָד אֱלֹהֵינוּ שְׁבַשְׁמִים וּבְאֲרָץ.

שְׁמוֹנֶה מִי יוֹדֵעַ?

Eight are the days to circumcision

שְׁמוֹנֶה אֲנִי יוֹדֵעַ: שְׁמוֹנֶה יָמֵי מִילָה, שִׁבְעָה יָמֵי שַׁבָּתָא, שְׁשֶׁה סְדְרֵי מִשְׁנָה, חֲמִשָּׁה חוּמְשֵׁי תוֹרָה, אַרְבַּע אֲמָהוּת, שְׁלֹשָׁה אָבוֹת, שְׁנֵי לְחוֹת הַבְּרִית, אֶחָד אֱלֹהֵינוּ שְׁבַשְׁמִים וּבְאֲרָץ.

תִּשְׁעָה מִי יוֹדֵעַ?

Nine are the months to child birth

תִּשְׁעָה אֲנִי יוֹדֵעַ: תִּשְׁעָה יָרְחֵי לְדָה, שְׁמוֹנֶה יָמֵי מִילָה, שִׁבְעָה יָמֵי שַׁבָּתָא, שְׁשֶׁה סְדְרֵי מִשְׁנָה, חֲמִשָּׁה חוּמְשֵׁי תוֹרָה, אַרְבַּע אֲמָהוּת, שְׁלֹשָׁה אָבוֹת, שְׁנֵי לְחוֹת הַבְּרִית, אֶחָד אֱלֹהֵינוּ שְׁבַשְׁמִים וּבְאֲרָץ.

עֶשְׂרֵה מִי יוֹדֵעַ?

Ten are the commandments

עֶשְׂרֵה אֲנִי יוֹדֵעַ: עֶשְׂרֵה דְבָרִים, תִּשְׁעָה יָרְחֵי לְדָה, שְׁמוֹנֶה יָמֵי מִילָה, שִׁבְעָה יָמֵי שַׁבָּתָא, שְׁשֶׁה סְדְרֵי מִשְׁנָה, חֲמִשָּׁה חוּמְשֵׁי תוֹרָה, אַרְבַּע אֲמָהוּת, שְׁלֹשָׁה אָבוֹת, שְׁנֵי לְחוֹת הַבְּרִית, אֶחָד אֱלֹהֵינוּ שְׁבַשְׁמִים וּבְאֲרָץ.

אֶחָד עָשָׂר מִי יוֹדֵעַ?

Eleven are the stars in Joseph's dream

אֶחָד עָשָׂר אֲנִי יוֹדֵעַ: אֶחָד עָשָׂר כּוֹכְבֵי־אֵשׁ, עֶשְׂרֵה דְבָרִים, תִּשְׁעָה יָרְחֵי לְדָה, שְׁמוֹנֶה יָמֵי מִילָה, שִׁבְעָה יָמֵי שַׁבָּתָא, שְׁשֶׁה סְדְרֵי מִשְׁנָה, חֲמִשָּׁה חוּמְשֵׁי תוֹרָה, אַרְבַּע אֲמָהוּת, שְׁלֹשָׁה אָבוֹת, שְׁנֵי לְחוֹת הַבְּרִית, אֶחָד אֱלֹהֵינוּ שְׁבַשְׁמִים וּבְאֲרָץ.

שנים עשר מי יודע?

Twelve are the tribes of Israel

שנים עשר אני יודע: שנים עשר שבטא,
 אחד עשר כוכבא, עשרה דברא, תשעה ירחי לדה, שמונה ימי
 מילה, שבעה ימי שבתא, ששה סדרי משנה, חמשה חומשי תורה,
 ארבע אמהות, שלשה אבות, שני לחות הברית, אחד אלהינו
 שבשמים ובארץ.

שלשה עשר מי יודע ?

Thirteen are the attributes of God

שלשה עשר אני יודע: שלשה עשר מדא,
 שנים עשר שבטא, אחד עשר כוכבא, עשרה דברא, תשעה
 ירחי לדה, שמונה ימי מילה, שבעה ימי שבתא, ששה סדרי
 משנה, חמשה חומשי תורה, ארבע אמהות, שלשה אבות, שני
 לחות הברית, אחד אלהינו שבשמים ובארץ.

חד גדיא

One Kid

חד גדיא, חד גדיא
 דזבין אבא בתרי זויזי, חד גדיא, חד גדיא.
 ואתא שונרא, ואכלה לגדיא, דזבין אבא בתרי זויזי, חד גדיא, חד
 גדיא.

ואתא כלבא, ונשף לשונרא, דאכלה לגדיא, דזבין אבא בתרי זויזי,
 חד גדיא, חד גדיא.

ואתא חוטררא, והפה לכלבא, דנשף לשונרא, דאכלה לגדיא,
 דזבין אבא בתרי זויזי, חד גדיא, חד גדיא.

ואתא נורא, ושרף לחוטררא, דהפה לכלבא, דנשף לשונרא,
 דאכלה לגדיא, דזבין אבא בתרי זויזי, חד גדיא, חד גדיא.

ואתא מיא, וכבה לנורא, דשרף לחוטררא, דהפה לכלבא, דנשף
 לשונרא, דאכלה לגדיא, דזבין אבא בתרי זויזי, חד גדיא, חד
 גדיא.

ואתא תורא, ושתא למיא, דכבה לנורא, דשרף לחוטררא, דהפה
 לכלבא, דנשף לשונרא, דאכלה לגדיא, דזבין אבא בתרי זויזי, חד
 גדיא, חד גדיא.

ואתא השוחט, ושחט לתורא, דשתא למיא, דכבה לנורא, דשרף
 לחוטררא, דהפה לכלבא, דנשף לשונרא, דאכלה לגדיא, דזבין
 אבא בתרי זויזי, חד גדיא, חד גדיא.

וְאַתָּא מְלַאךְ הַמָּוֶת, וְשַׁחַט לְשׁוֹחֵט, דְּשַׁחַט לְתוֹרָא, דְּשַׁתָּא לְמִנְיָא,
 דְּכַבָּה לְנוֹרָא, דְּשַׁרְף לְחוּטְרָא, דְּהִפָּה לְכַלְבָּא, דְּנָשַׁף לְשׁוֹנְרָא,
 דְּאָכְלָה לְגִדְיָא, דְּזָבִין אָבָא בְּתַרֵּי זִוְזִי, חַד גְּדִיָּא, חַד גְּדִיָּא.

וְאַתָּא הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא, וְשַׁחַט לְמְלַאךְ הַמָּוֶת, דְּשַׁחַט לְשׁוֹחֵט,
 דְּשַׁחַט לְתוֹרָא, דְּשַׁתָּא לְמִנְיָא, דְּכַבָּה לְנוֹרָא, דְּשַׁרְף לְחוּטְרָא,
 דְּהִפָּה לְכַלְבָּא, דְּנָשַׁף לְשׁוֹנְרָא, דְּאָכְלָה לְגִדְיָא, דְּזָבִין אָבָא בְּתַרֵּי
 זִוְזִי, חַד גְּדִיָּא, חַד גְּדִיָּא.

The Holy One, blessed be He, came and slew the angel of death that slew the slaughterer that killed the ox that drank the water that quenched the fire that burned the stick that beat the dog that bit the cat that ate the kid that father bought for two zuzim; One kid, one kid.

Step 14: Acceptance

נְרָצָה

חֲסַל סֵדוֹר פְּסַח כְּהִלְכְתּוֹ, כְּכֹל מְשַׁפְטוֹ וְחִקְתּוֹ. כַּאֲשֶׁר זָכִינוּ
 לְסֵדֵר אֹתוֹ, כֵּן נִזְכָּה לַעֲשׂוֹתוֹ. זָךְ שׁוֹכֵן מְעוֹנָה, קוֹיִם קָהַל עֲדַת
 מִי מְנָה. בְּקִרְוֹב נְהַל נְטַעֵי כְנֵה, פְּדוּיִם לְצִיּוֹן בְּרִנָּה.

**The Seder is accepted by God:
 The Seder concludes according to Halacha,
 Complete in all its laws and ordinances.
 Just as we were privileged to arrange it tonight,
 So may we be granted to perform it again.
 O Pure One who dwells in the heights above,
 Establish us as a countless people once again,
 Speedily guide Your plants Israel as a redeemed people,
 To the land of Zion with song.**

**לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בִּירוּשָׁלַיִם:
 NEXT YEAR IN JERUSALEM**