

The Original Birthright: Seder Night in Jerusalem

It is no secret that the seder is designed to transport us across space and time. In the famous words of the Haggadah:

בְּכָל־דּוֹר וָדוֹר חַיֵּב אָדָם לְרַאוֹת אֶת־עַצְמוֹ,
כְּאִלּוּ הוּא יֵצֵא מִמִּצְרַיִם.

In every generation, each person is obligated to view himself as if he went out of Egypt.

On the night of Pesach we are obligated to see ourselves as if we ourselves had endured the bondage of Egypt¹ and we ourselves had been redeemed, and this theme manifests itself in a variety of practices throughout the evening.

At the same time, the Netziv² taught that hidden in plain sight there is an additional motif to our seder as well: **to try to recreate the observance of Pesach at the time of the Beit haMikdash in Jerusalem.** We cannot fail to notice this element when it comes to *korech*, where we proclaim aloud:

זָכַר לְמִקְדָּשׁ כְּהֵלֵל: כֹּן עָשָׂה הַלֵּל בְּזִמְנוֹ שְׁבִית
הַמִּקְדָּשׁ הָיָה קַיָּם ...

We are remembering the Mikdash, according to Hillel, and doing as he did in the time that the Beit haMikdash stood.

And indeed, this is explicit in the Gemara (*Pesachim* 115a) when it



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comes to *korech*, to reenacting Hillel's approach, and doing as he did at the time of the Beit haMikdash, namely eating matzah and maror together.³ But *korech* is just one example. Based on this approach of the Netziv, it is fascinating to see how reverberations of the Beit haMikdash echo through the ages throughout the seder night.

Hallel in Shul

Many communities recite Hallel in shul on the evening of Pesach before returning home to the seder, which is the only occasion during the year that Hallel is recited at night. The *Sefer haMichtam*⁴ (*Pesachim* 116b) suggests that it is a way of remembering the chanting of Hallel in the Beit haMikdash during the slaughter of the korban Pesach.

Kittel

The Netziv suggests that the reason for wearing a kittel at the seder is to recreate the atmosphere of eating sacrificial meat in Jerusalem. Since

eating a korban is tantamount to sharing a meal with Hashem, and hence conducted with the greatest gravitas, it surely included wearing special garments. By wearing a kittel, we attempt to recapture that atmosphere.

Seder Plate

The Talmud (*Pesachim* 114b) tells us that we need to have two cooked foods at the seder, one to commemorate the korban Pesach and one to commemorate the korban chagigah. The korban chagigah brought on erev Pesach was not brought on the first Pesach in Egypt, but is a later, Rabbinic mitzvah, and hence the egg is another way we remember Pesach in Jerusalem on the seder night.

The Gra⁵ suggests that this is the underlying reason for the custom to eat eggs at the beginning of the meal; that, like the egg on the seder plate, they represent eating the korban chagigah.

As this volume is dedicated to Cantor Jerome L. Simons, it is fitting that Rabbi Yolkut, who has close connections to the Simons family, write this article in his memory.

Urchatz

On Pesach, we wash before eating the karpas, which is not our standard procedure. Typically we wash only for bread. During the time of the Beit haMikdash, the requirement to wash one's hands for food was much broader. The Netziv suggests that holding ourselves to a higher standard of the laws of ritual impurity is another way that we try to recreate the atmosphere at the time of the Beit haMikdash.

Kol Ditzrich

Many commentators on the Haggadah are puzzled by the opening passage in maggid that seems to invite guests after the seder has already begun. In his commentary on the Haggadah, the *Shibbolei haLeket*⁶ suggests that the invitation originated in the process of assembling *chaburot* (groups) in the time of the Beit haMikdash. While the actual invitation occurred before the korban Pesach was offered, we have retained a vestige of that practice

at the beginning of the seder as an additional way of remembering the Beit haMikdash.

Maror

Technically speaking, the biblical mitzvah of maror is only obligatory when eating the korban Pesach,⁷ but Chazal created a Rabbinic obligation to continue to eat maror at the seder. This could be explained as a way of perpetuating as much of the experience of the korban Pesach as

DOUBLE DARE - TEN PLAGUES

A seder activity for kids

Split the participants into two teams. For each round, call up a volunteer from each team. Ask a question to volunteer A, if he does not know the answer, he can either: dare the other team to answer, which means volunteer B can now answer the question, (if B answers the question, he gets the point and it is now team B's turn again) or double dare - which means they perform a 'dare' against each other.

Whoever answers the question gets a point. Whoever wins the double dare, gets two points.

The double dares are as follows.

Dam: Prepare two pans of red jello filled with about 10-15 jelly fish. The two volunteers have to take the fish out with their mouths only, the one to finish all the fish first - wins.
During the plague of blood, all of the water in the sea turned to blood, causing the death of all the fish

Tzfardeah: A good 'ol game of leapfrog

Kinim: fill up a spoon of marshmallow fluff, and stick in around 15-20 mini chocolate chips, the volunteers have to guess how many chips there are, (this only works if you put in a lot of chips, otherwise it's not that funny).
Chocolate chips kind of look like lice, and marshmallow fluff kind of looks like skin

Arov: Fill up a plate of around 10 gummy bears and have the volunteers eat them with chopsticks only. First one to finish wins.

Dever: This is a relay race, have the volunteers hold onto their ankles and run across them room, if they fall they have to start over.
The animals died and fell over.

Shchin: Have each volunteer put an 'after-8' chocolate on their forehead, (or something of that size and shape). They need to get it from their forehead to their mouth without using their hands. (the trick is to get it over the eye)

Barad: Buy two bags of marshmallow, mini or large and have the volunteers stuff their mouth, whoever fills the most, wins.

Arbeh: Buy a package of Passover candy that comes in long strands. There are two variations of the game.

1) You tie two separate ropes of about 5 strands of candy tied together, the volunteers have to eat the ropes with their hands behind their back, whoever finishes first wins.

2) You make one long rope of about 10 strands of candy, and they each put one end in their mouth, whoever gets to the middle first, wins.
The locust ate all of the crops

Choshech: For this game, you need 2 volunteers. have one blindfolded and the other sitting, the blindfolded one has to feed the other one applesauce, whoever finishes the bowl first, wins.

Makat Bechorot: You have to try and get the volunteers to laugh, the first one to laugh is out.

Activity by Gaby Scarowski, Executive Director of Ottawa NCSY

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possible. In fact, R' Shneur Zalman of Liadi⁸ refers to our contemporary mitzvah as *zecher le-Mikdash* — a remembrance of the Beit haMikdash.

Afikoman

There is a consensus among Rishonim that the final piece of matzah consumed at the seder recalls the eating of the korban Pesach.⁹

R' Chaim Soloveitchik¹⁰ is reported to have taken this representation so seriously that he insisted on keeping the afikoman under his watch the entire seder, based on the idea that a korban becomes disqualified by *hesech ha-da'at* (inattention.)

Opening the Door

Many suggestions have been made for the reason to open the door after Birkat haMazon. This may be another manifestation of the desire to recreate the setting of ancient Jerusalem. Since the korban Pesach needed to be eaten on the ground level, the group that ate the korban was confined to a limited space to eat the korban, and would not leave out of fear of transgressing the prohibition of taking the meat of the korban out of the home where it was eaten. Once the korban was complete, the people would go up to the rooftops to complete Hallel, in chorus with the other hundreds of thousands of Jews in Jerusalem, in the cool evening air. Our opening of the door, then, would suggest that ancient change of venue.¹¹

The ultimate denouement of the process of the Exodus was the building of the Beit haMikdash in Jerusalem. The shirah sung on the shores of the Red Sea ended with a vision of Hashem's Temple,

and the final Divine kindness celebrated in Dayvenu is the Beit HaMikdash. Interestingly though, there is a midrash that on the very first Pesach, the Jews were mysteriously transported to Jerusalem to eat the korban Pesach and then returned to Egypt for the Exodus.¹² The old practice of German Jews was to greet each other on the night of the seder with the words "*Bau Gutt*,"¹³ meaning "build well," an allusion to the prayer expressed in *Adir Hu*¹⁴ that Hashem quickly build the Mikdash. Part of the unique magic of the seder night is the ability to somehow, like our ancestors in Egypt, find ourselves transcending our surroundings and building the Mikdash in Jerusalem even as we sit at home.

Notes

1. The Rambam emphasizes that "as if he left Egypt" includes being able to see ourselves as having been slaves as well: *In each and every generation, a person must present himself as if he, himself, has now left the slavery of Egypt, as [Devarim 6:23] states: "He took us out from there." Regarding this manner, God commanded in the Torah: "Remember that you were a slave [Devarim 5:15]" — i.e., as if you, yourself, were a slave and went out to freedom and were redeemed. (Chametz u'Matzah 7:6)*

2. R' Naftali Zvi Yehuda Berlin, 1816-1893, Volozhin. References to the Netziv in this essay are drawn from his introduction to *Haggadah Imrei Shefer*.

3. What exactly Hillel's practice was is subject to some debate. Some feel that his "sandwich" included the korban Pesach itself (Rashi and Rashbam, *Pesachim* 115a), while others maintain that even during the time of the Beit haMikdash itself, Hillel only ate matzah and maror together (Rambam, *Chametz u'Matzah* 6:7). This debate is reflected in varying texts of the Haggadah that read either "he wrapped matzah, and maror and ate them together," (the more common text) or "he wrapped Pesach, matzah and maror and ate them together" (*Taz OC* 475:9).

4. R' David ben Levi, 13th century Narbonne.

5. R' Eliyahu, the Gaon of Vilna (1720-1797),

Orach Chayim 476:2.

6. R' Tzidkiyah ben Avraham Anav, 13th c. Italy.

7. The linkage of the Biblical obligation of maror to the korban Pesach may support the idea that bitter herbs were served as a condiment or complement to the meat of the korban, and hence were superfluous without the korban Pesach. (cf. *Or haChaim*, Shemot 12:8)

8. 1745-1812 (*Shulchan Aruch haRav, OC* 475:15).

9. How exactly is a matter of some debate. Rashi (*Pesachim* 119b) maintains that the afikoman recalls the matzah that accompanied the korban Pesach, while the Rosh (*Pesachim* 10:34) and others believe that it is a symbol of the korban Pesach itself. The *Mishneh Berurah* (477:1) suggests, based on the *Bach* and other Acharonim, that one should eat two *kezetim* of matzah in order to fulfil both approaches.

10. 1853-1918, Brisk. Quoted in the name of his grandson, Rabbi Joseph B Soloveitchik, in *An Exalted Evening* p. 124.

11. Quoted by R' Moshe Harari (*Mikraei Kodesh- Hilcot Leil haSeder* chapter 10, note 5) in the name of R' Shmuel Rozvosky, and by R' Michel Shurkin (*Harerei Kedem* vol. 2, p. 229) in the name of R' Shlomo Zalman Auerbach.

12. Targum Yonatan to Shemot 19:4.

13. <http://www.moreshesashkenaz.org/mm/publications/Madrach.pdf> מדרוך למנהג אשכנז המובהק

14. More specifically, a reference to *Almechteger Gott*, a German-Yiddish version of *Adir Hu*, the lyrics of which can be found at http://www.hebrewbooks.org/pagefeed/hebrewbooks_org_10693_104.pdf. (Whether the original song was Hebrew or Yiddish is discussed in R' Menachem Mendel Kasher, *Haggadah Sheleimah*, p. 190, footnote 13.)