

Understanding the Haggadah

Selected Topics in Talmud II

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Introduction

Understanding the Haggadah

*The following ideas are based on *shiurim* that I have heard from my Rebbi, Rav Aharon Kahn *ל"גו"ם* over the years.

If you are standing too close to an oil painting, and have difficulty discerning the composition, you should probably take a step back. If you are having trouble understanding why the *Haggadah* is a cholent of seemingly disparate texts and concepts, you should probably do the same.

I find that most commentaries to the *Haggadah* serve to clarify isolated points within the *Haggadah*, but few provide the necessary birds eye view, which allows us to appreciate the broader message. As a general rule, problems can typically be dealt with most effectively by understanding the background, structure and purpose of that in question.

The most important question to ask about the *Haggadah*, is regarding its purpose. What is the purpose of the *Haggadah*? What are we trying to accomplish?

The essential purpose of the *Haggadah* in general, and the *maggid* section in particular, is to provide us with a formal structure through which to properly fulfill the *mitzvah* of *sippur yetzias Mitzrayim* – telling over the story of the exodus from Egypt. We are commanded in the Torah, to not only verbally remember the exodus daily, but on the night of the fifteenth on *Nissan* specifically, to relate the broader story in greater detail. Our *Haggadah* is the formal composition through which the Jewish People have fulfilled this commandment for centuries.

The purpose and value of this ancient sacred formulation being clear, I would like to point out some of its idiosyncrasies, in order to better appreciate the tapestry that lies before us at the *seder*. Imagine that you are a five year old child attending the *seder*, or a *baal teshuvah* who has been to many *Shabbos* meals, but has yet to experience the *Pesach seder*. The freshness and simplicity of this approach, will enable us to take a fresh look at the *Haggadah* and better understand what it is trying to express.

I. Curiosities of the *seder*

Kadeish

The first thing that the *seder* presents us with, is not at all surprising: *kiddush*. This is something with which every religious Jew is familiar, as we perform this rite every *Shabbos* and *Yom Tov eve*. The night of the *seder*, however, the *kiddush* takes on added significance as it is the first of four required cups of wine expressing our freedom. Be that as it may, this point is almost¹ entirely absent to the eyes of the onlooker.

Urchatz – Karpas

Following the *kiddush*, the *Haggadah* again presents us with something familiar enough, the ritual washing of the hands. While normally, we expect to partake of the *chalah* after washing, the night of the *seder*, we anxiously anticipate to eat the *matzah*. However, we are somewhat disappointed when instead, we are given a tiny sliver of celery, parsley or potato, to dip in salt water instead. Our five year old is willing to go along with this exercise, because you get to dip it in salt water, and that is real fun; nonetheless, the *matzah* will have to wait. At this point, our curiosity is stirred. Why did we not make the blessing and eat the *matzah*?

1. The manner in which the wine is drunk is unusual, in that one is required to lean. Already, before anything else has begun, we notice that the chairs have been set up in a manner enabling those present to lean while they eat and drink. A Sefardi friend pointed out to me that they set up mattresses on the floor and eat off of a low table, an even more shocking picture.

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Yachatz

We are not surprised when the leader of the *seder* proceeds to pick up one of the *matzos* (although we are curious why he picked the middle one), because we are expecting to hear the blessing recited upon eating *matzah*. Things take a turn for the worse, however, when, in a sudden fit of rage, the *seder* leader proceeds to karate chop the *matzah* in two. The larger part he deposits in a bag, which he puts away (and is perhaps snatched moments later by our older brother or sister), and the remainder he returns to its original place between the other two *matzos* at the table. He then declares, “This is the bread of affliction which our fathers ate in the land of Egypt. All who are hungry come and eat, all who need come and take part in the *pesach*...” Being that it is probably around nine o’clock at night, and we have not eaten anything for many hours, we quietly remind the *seder* leader that, um, we, are in fact hungry... and we could use some food!

Maggid

At which point, we are thoroughly shocked by what happens next. All the food is surreptitiously removed from the table. Now, the burnt egg and the dried out shank bone that has been sitting out at the table for several hours, didn’t look all that appetizing anyhow, but a spoonful or two of the *charoses* would have really hit the spot. At this point, the children at the *seder* are convinced, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that the old man has finally lost it. Which is why the children are then allowed to ask the fundamental question, “What in the world is going on?!” – more familiarly known as the *mah nishtanah*.

Since the curiosity of the children, and perhaps a few thinking adults, has been piqued, we have no choice but to respond. The *seder* leader lets the proverbial cat out of the bag and declares, “We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, but the Lord our God took us out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm.”

Okay, got it. Stories over. Let’s eat!

But he continues:

“Had God not taken our fathers out of Egypt, then we, our children and grandchildren would still be enslaved to Pharaoh in Egypt. Even if we are all wise, and perceptive, experienced, and versed in Torah, it would still be our duty to tell about the exodus from Egypt.” In fact, *“The more one talks about the Exodus, the more praiseworthy he is.”*

You know, I remember when Rabbi Akiva made his *seder*, *“It happened that Rabbis Eliezer, Joshua, Elazar ben Azariah, Akiva and Tarfon were reclining at the seder table in Bnei Brak,”* they talked about the exodus the whole night! Their students even had to come inform them that it was time to say shema! Hey, you know, speaking about the shema, Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah, wasn’t sure if we should say the third paragraph at night, you know, the paragraph that talks about the exodus, until Ben Zoma explained it to him like this...

Like an old man, with so many years of life experience and stories, the *seder* leader seems to tangent into random stories about Rabbis having *sedarim*. He also informs us of a discussion revolving around the *mitzvah* to remember the exodus daily, and whether or not it applies at night – something which has absolutely nothing to do with the *seder*, nor the *mitzvah* of telling over the story of the exodus on the night of the fifteenth! Then he tells us about someone else’s four sons and what one should respond to their questions. He even starts mumbling something about having a *seder* two weeks ago on *rosh chodesh*, but he couldn’t because the *mitzvah* is specifically tonight (and we are

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starting to wish that *we* had had the *seder* two weeks ago, while he was still at work!).

Finally, he returns to the story of the exodus. About fifteen minutes ago, he had told us that we were slaves in Egypt and God took us out. This time, instead of telling us about the ten plagues or the sea splitting, he begins the story with Terach, the father of Abraham, informing us that he worshipped idols.

That is a bummer.

So what?!

Anyway, he had a great-grandson named Jacob, who ended up in Egypt and his grandchildren ended up slaves to Pharaoh.

Oh.

At this point, we feel that at least we understand what's going on. The *seder* leader is now relating the story of the exodus, he just wanted to give us some background. We're just a little mad at him for his earlier tangents – but maybe it was the wine.

What is strange is the way in which he tells the story. He could have said it in his own words, or maybe read from the sections of the *Torah* that speak about the Jews' lives in Egypt and the redemption (you know, like the first half of the book of *Shmos*!). Instead, he reads a verse from the paragraph that a farmer would recite upon bringing his first fruits to the Temple in Jerusalem:

“An Aramean sought to destroy my father, however, he went down to Egypt and sojourned there few in number and there he became a great, mighty, and numerous nation...”

He then takes each phrase in the verse and explains what it hints to... usually by quoting a verse from *Shmos* where the story is actually related explicitly! Why doesn't he just read from the book of *Shmos* then?!

He finishes the story, including a list of all the miracles on the sea, we get to sing *dayeinu* and he decides to point out, and explain the symbolism of the various items on the table. The bone represents the *korban pesach*. The *matzah* represents the bread that didn't have time to rise when God took the Jews out of Egypt (which is confusing, because at the beginning of the *seder* he told us we ate it when we were slaves!), and the *maror* represents the bitter slavery.

Okay, thanks for sharing.

Anything else?

Yeah, just one more thing. In case you were wondering, every generation has an obligation to see itself as if it had personally left Egypt. I guess the *seder* leader takes that very seriously, because the next thing we know, he's singing *hallel*, praising God for taking him out of Egypt.

With that, he makes another blessing on his wine, and drinks cup number two.

Rochtzah etc.

We wash again, and this time, we actually eat the *matzah* and the *maror* and the meal begins.

Fairly simple and straightforward, no?

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I would like to understand the basics of the seder. As the simple son asks, “Huh?” The *Haggadah* is supposed to be the official formulation of the story of the exodus from Egypt. If we were making the *Haggadah*, if we had been in charge of formulating the guidelines for proper fulfillment of this *mitzvah* – is this how we would have done it?! I imagine that we would have either instructed people to relate the story in their own words, or alternatively referred them to the appropriate passages in *Shmos* where the official story is related by Hashem Himself! However, in the *Haggadah*, we find the following structure:

- (1) Weird behaviors.
- (2) Old man rambling section.
- (3) Story told in “right hand scratching left ear” manner.
- (4) Randomly explaining the centerpiece.
- (5) *Hallel*.

Among the many questions we ought to have at this point are:

Why do we have a series of bizarre activities at the beginning?

After the child recites the *mah nishtanah*, we answer that we were slaves and God took us out. Isn't that all we need to say? Did we thereby fulfill our obligation? What do we need the rest of the *Haggadah* for?

Why do we have a complete tangent to stories about how *gedolim* discussed the story?

Why do we talk about the laws of remembering the exodus daily?

Why do we talk about the four sons?

Who cares that you thought you could have had the *seder* two weeks ago. So you were wrong, get over it!

Why do we start the story of the exodus all over again, but this time going all the way back to the father of Abraham?

Why do we have to “*darshun* (extrapolate phrase by phrase)” the passage that a farmer declares upon bringing his first fruit to the Temple in order to tell the story of the exodus? Why don't we just tell over the story in our own words (in five minutes or less)? If you insist on reading from an official text, so read through the first few sections of *sefer Shmos*!

Why do we mention all the items on the table and explain their symbolism? Is that part of the story?

What's going on at the end that we state the need to see ourselves as personally leaving Egypt?

Why are we singing *hallel*? Isn't that something we reserve for *davening*?

There is so much going on at the *seder*, can we make sense out of it all?

As we mentioned above, the purpose of the *Haggadah* is to provide us with a structure through which to fulfill the *mitzvah* of telling over the story of the exodus. So we should begin by understanding what exactly is required of us to fulfill this obligation. Perhaps this will shed some light on the structure of the *Haggadah*.

Sources and Analysis

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What are we trying to accomplish with the הלצה? Is it a custom? A Rabbinic institution? A Divine commandment? There are many components to the הלצה, as we have pointed out, but it all revolves around one מצוה and that is why it is called the הלצה. We will begin with this, and build around it until we can understand everything in the הלצה, הצורת ה' ת' הלצה.

The relating of the story of the exodus from Egypt, or more appropriately, the redemption of the Jewish People by God from Pharaoh and slavery with awesome miracles, is a Divine commandment:

1

שמות פרק א' פסוק ז'-

Moshe said to the nation, **“Remember this day when you went out of Egypt from the house of bondage**, for with a mighty hand Hashem took you out from this; and do not eat *chomeitz*. Today you are going out in the spring month. It shall be when Hashem brings you to the land of the Canaani, Chiti, Emori, Chivi and Yevusi, that was promised to your forefathers to give to you, a land flowing with milk and date-honey, you shall serve with this service in this month. Seven days you shall eat *matzahs* and on the seventh day a holiday to Hashem. *Matzahs* you shall eat for the seven days and no *chomeitz* shall be seen to you and no *se'or* shall be seen to you within your entire borders. **You shall tell your son on that day saying, ‘For the sake of this Hashem did to me in His taking me out of Egypt.’** It shall be a sign on your hand and a remembrance between your eyes, in order that the Torah of Hashem will be in your mouth, for with a mighty hand Hashem took you out of Egypt. You shall guard this law for its set time from year to year.”

וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל הָעָם זְכוֹר אֶת הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר יֵצְאתֶם מִמִּצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים כִּי בְּיָזְק יַד הוֹצִיא יְקֹנֶךָ אֶתְכֶם מִיָּד וְלֹא יֵאָכֵל זֶמֶן: הַיּוֹם אֲתֶם יֹצְאִים בְּיָדֶיךָ הָאֲחִיבִים: וְהָיָה כִּי יָבִיֵאֵךְ יְקֹנֶךָ אֶל אֶרֶץ הַכְּנַעֲנִי וְהַחִיטִי וְהָעַמֹּרִי וְהַיְבוּסִי אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לְאַבְרָהָם לֵאמֹר לְךָ אֶרֶץ זָבֵת וְזָבֵב וְדָבָשׁ וְעַבְדֵת אֶת הָעֹבֵד הַזֶּה הַיּוֹם בְּיָדֶיךָ הַיּוֹם: שִׁבַּע יָמִים תֹּאכַל מִצַּת וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי זֶמֶן לִיקְוֹן: מִצַּת יֵאָכֵל אֶת שִׁבַּע יָמִים הַיּוֹם וְלֹא יֵרָאֶה לְךָ זֶמֶן וְלֹא יֵרָאֶה לְךָ שֶׁאֵר בָּכֵל גְּבֻרָה: וְהִגַּדְתָּ לְבִנְךָ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא לֵאמֹר בְּעָבוּר זֶה עָשָׂה יְקֹנֶךָ לִי בְּצֵאתִי מִמִּצְרַיִם: וְהָיָה לְךָ קְאוֹת עַל יָדֶךָ וְלִכְפֹּרוֹן בֵּין עֵינֶיךָ לְמַעַן תִּהְיֶה תּוֹרַת יְקֹנֶךָ בְּפִיךָ כִּי בְיַד זְנוּקָה הוֹצֵאתִי יְקֹנֶךָ מִמִּצְרַיִם: וְשִׁמַּרְתָּ אֶת הַזְנוּקָה הַזֹּאת לְמוֹעֵדָה מִבְּמִימָה:

We find possibly two instructions here:

- (1) Remember or mention the day. When? How often? What details do I have to mention to fulfill the מצוה?
- (2) There is also a מצוה to “relate” to your sons or children on a specific day and “say this specific verse”? What is the הלצה? Why is this term used and not אמרת or וספרת? Do we need to say this verse of הצהור? Is הלצה and saying הצהור two separate things or is that the הלצה? What does הצהור לה mean exactly? Because of? For the purpose of? Is it not lying to say ל? Was this only addressed at the generation that experienced it? Can't be, it says we have to guard this law א.א.א. No? We can imagine the Jewish People asking all these questions to Moshe when he instructed them, and we can even imagine Moshe himself asking these questions to God!

We see that God² has something in mind, but we need to know what the תורה שהצ"ח says about this to answer

2. The truth is that this verse is a statement of Moshe, as it says, “Moshe said to the nation etc.”, so where do we find that this is a commandment from Hashem? The answer seems to be that in פרק א', Hashem gave many instructions to Moshe regarding Pesach, one of them being the commandment to remember this day: “This day shall be for you (plural) for a remembrance, and you shall celebrate it

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all our questions and properly fulfill the מצוה.

Do you have any suggestions to answer these questions? What do you think?

2

רש"י שאות פרק א' פסוק ז

Remember this day. It teaches us that we [must] זכור את היום הזה. למד שמזכירין יליחת מלכים בכל יום: mention the exodus from Egypt every day.

According to רש"י, this verse is not a commandment unique to the night of the 15th of Nissan, rather this is a mitzvah every day.

What is required to fulfill this mitzvah? Is remembering in your mind enough? Do you need to express it verbally? If we are already commanded to remember the exodus daily, why is there another commandment of וזהגרת unique to the 15th? Is there a difference between the two commandments? What is the difference between זכור and וזהגרת?

3

ראמ"ט הלכות חמץ ומצה פרק ז הלכה א

It is a positive commandment of the Torah to speak about the miracles and wonders that were done to our forefathers in Egypt on the night of the fifteenth of Nissan, as it says, "Remember this day that you went out of Egypt (Exodus 13)," like it says, "Remember the Sabbath day (Exodus 20)". What is the source that it is on the night of the fifteenth? We are taught, "You shall tell your

מצות עשה של תורה לספר בנסים ונפלאות שנעשו לאבותינו במצרים בליל חמשה עשר בניסן שנאמר +שמות י"ג+ זכור את היום הזה אשר יצאתם ממצרים כמו שנאמר +שמות כ'+ זכור את יום השבת, ומנין שביליל חמשה עשר תלמוד לומר והגדת לבנך ביום ההוא לאמר בעבור זה בשעה שיש מצה ומרור מונחים לפניך. ואף על פי שאין לו בן, אפילו חכמים גדולים חייבים לספר ביציאת מצרים וכל המאריך בדברים שאירעו ושהיו הרי זה משובח.

son on that day saying, 'for this', at the time when there is matzah and maror lying before you. Even though he has no son, even great sages are obligated to speak about the exodus from Egypt, and praised is whomever deals at length with the things that occurred and were.

The ראמ"ט is curious for several reasons. (1) How does he understand זכור? Does he disagree with רש"י? Is it only a מצוה on the night of the fifteenth? (2) Why does he compare it to remembering וזהגרת? Are they really the same in every regard or does he have something specific in mind? (3) How does וזהגרת relate back to the mitzvah he began with of זכור? Are these two distinct מצוות or the same? What does the ראמ"ט add at the end?

as a holiday etc. (Exodus 12:14)". Perhaps, the remembrance referred to is not the holiday itself, but rather a reference to a distinct מצוה to remember the exodus independent of the holiday. See Rashi there who indicates this. However, no specific reference is made in ראמ"ט to a telling over of the story to children, so where or when did Hashem command that? One is tempted to answer that the telling over is a detail, or embellishment of the remembrance, as seems to be the presentation of the ראמ"ט, based on the midrash below - as opposed to two distinct מצוות. This requires further study.

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The פ"ק also has many many details in this מצוה. Does remembering something really require all these details?

4

ספר פאצנות פ"ק מצות צה קנ

The 157th commandment is that He commanded us to speak about the exodus from Egypt on the night of the fifteenth of Nissan, in the beginning of the night, according to the ability of the speaker. Whatever he adds to the story and speaks at length to greaten that which Hashem did for us, and what the Egyptians did with us out of injustice and iniquity, and how Hashem took our vengeance from them, and in thanking Him, may He be blessed, for that which he rewarded us out of His loving-kindness, would be even better. As they said, "Whomever lengthens his story of the exodus, this is praiseworthy". The verse that indicates this commandment is His statement, may He be blessed, "You shall tell your son on that day etc.". Comes the explanation of it: "You shall tell your son", possibly from the first of the month, we are taught, "on that day." If it had only said "on that day" possibly one could have fulfilled it earlier in the day, so we are taught, "for this", "for this" I only said at the time when matzah and maror are

והמצוה הקנ"ז היא שצונו לספר ביציאת מצרים בליל חמשה עשר בניסן בתחלת הלילה כפי צחות לשון המספר. וכל מה שיוסיף במאמר ויאריך הדברים בהגדלת מה שעשה לנו השם ומה שעשו עמנו המצרים מעול וחמס ואיך לקח השם נקמתנו מהם ובהודות לו ית' על מה שגמלנו מחסדיו יהיה יותר טוב. כמו שאמרו (הגש"פ) כל המאריך לספר ביציאת מצרים הרי זה משובח. והכתוב שבא על הצווי הזה הוא אמרו ית' (ס"פ בא) והגדת לבנך ביום ההוא וכו'. ובא הפירוש (שם ומכיל') והגדת לבנך יכול מראש חדש תלמוד לומר ביום ההוא אי ביום ההוא יכול מבעוד יום תלמוד לומר בעבור זה בעבור זה לא אמרתי אלא בשעה שיש מצה ומרור מונחים לפניך. כלומר מתחלת הלילה חייב אתה לספר. ולשון מכילתא [דרשב"י במדרש הגדול] מכלל שנאמר כי ישאלך בנך יכול אם ישאלך אתה מגיד לו ואם לאו אין אתה מגיד לו תלמוד לומר והגדת לבנך אע"פ שאינו שואלך אין לי אלא בזמן שיש לו בן בינו לבין עצמו בינו לבין אחרים מניין תלמוד לומר ויאמר משה אל העם זכור את היום הזה אשר יצאתם ממצרים. כלומר שהוא צוה לזכרו כמו אמרו (עשה"ד ע' קנה) זכור את יום השבת לקדשו. וכבר ידעת לשון אמרם (הגש"פ) ואפילו כולנו חכמים כלנו נבונים כלנו יודעים את התורה כלה מצוה עלינו לספר ביציאת מצרים וכל המספר ביציאת מצרים הרי זה משובח. וכבר התבאר משפטי מצוה זו בסוף פסחים (קטו ב - קיא א):

lying before you. In other words, you are obligated to speak at the beginning of the night. The language of the [Midrash] Mechilta, "The implication of that which it says, 'When your son will ask you' is that possibly if he asks you then you should tell him, but if not then you should not tell him, so we are taught, 'You shall tell your son' even though he does not ask you. I only know at a time when he has a son, when he is by himself, or with others, how do we know? We are taught, 'Moshe said to the nation, remember this day that you left Egypt.' In other words, that He commanded to remember it, like His statement, 'Remember the Sabbath day to sanctify it'. You already know the language of their statement, 'Even if we are all sages, we are all of great understanding, we all know the entire Torah, it is incumbent upon us to speak about the exodus from Egypt, and whomever speaks about the exodus, this is praiseworthy'. The laws of this commandment have already been explained at the end of [tractate] Pesachim (115b - 118a):

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Does this *רמב"ס* help to shed light on any of our questions on the *משנה תורה*? Why does the *רמב"ס* here quote the verse of *והגדת* for the basic *מצוה*, and only quote *זכור* for when there is no son - whereas in the *משנה תורה* he quoted *זכור* as the source for the basic *מצוה*? Is this a contradiction? Are these two distinct *מצוות* or one *מצוה*? The practical difference could be critical: Remembering may require only a thought, or verbal statement, whereas telling a story involves much more.

5

אכילתא צרה' שאנו בר' יוחאי' סרק' א' אות' ז

Moshe said to the nation remember this day. From the implication of that which it says, "It will be when your son will ask you tomorrow," it is possible that only if he asks you do you tell him, but if he does not ask, then you do not tell him, we are therefore taught, "You should tell your son," even though he does not ask you. I only know regarding a time when a person has a son. How do we know when he is by himself, or with others? We are taught, "Moshe said to the nation, 'Remember this day (that you left Egypt).'"

ויאמר משה אל העם זכור את היום הזה מכלל שנאמר והיה כי ישאלך בנך מחר לאמר יכול אם [י]שאלך אתה מגיד לו ואם לאו אי אתה מגיד לו ת"ל והגדת לבנך אע"פ שאינו שואלך. אין לי אלא בזמן שיש לו בן בינו לבין עצמו בינו לבין אחרים מנין ת"ל ויאמר משה אל העם זכור את היום הזה (אשר יצאתם ממצרים).

According to this *מדרש*, when one has no son he is nonetheless obligated. Is this the same obligation/mitzvah, or is it a different mitzvah without a child? This would appear to be the source for the *רמב"ס*. Is this against 'רש"י?

Understanding the Haggadah

"*רש"י* told us that *לזכור את היום הזה* is a *מצוה* to remember the exodus every day of the year. From the *פס"ק* it is not so clear. Is there another verse that commands us in remembering the exodus daily?

6

פס"ק פלגות קריאת שמע פרק א' פל' ט-ז

Twice daily we read *krias shema*; in the evening and in the morning, as it is said, "When you lie down and when you arise," in the time that it is normal for people lying down, this is night, and in the time that it is normal for people arising, and this is day.

What does he read? Three sections, and these are they: *Shema*, *Vehayah im shamoah*, *vayomer*, and we first read the section of *shema* because it contains the unity of Hashem, love for Him, and learning for Him, which is the essential matter that all else depends on. Afterwards, *vehayah im shamoah* which contains a commandment regarding all the other commandments, and after that the section of *tzitzis*, because it too contains a commandment of remembering all the commandments.

Even though the commandment of *tzitzis* is not customary at night, we read it at night because it contains a remembrance of the exodus from Egypt, and it is a commandment to mention the exodus from Egypt in the day and in the night, as it is said, "In order that you remember the day you left the Land of Egypt all the days of your life". The recital of these three sections in this order is what is referred to as *krias shema*.

פעמים בכל יום קוראין ק"ש בערב ובבקר, שנאמר ובשכבך ובקומך בשעה שדרך בני אדם שוכבין וזה הוא לילה, ובשעה שדרך בני אדם עומדין וזה הוא יום.

ומה הוא קורא שלשה פרשיות אלו הן: שמע והיה אם שמוע ויאמר, ומקדימין לקרות פרשת שמע מפני שיש בה יחוד השם ואהבתו ותלמודו שהוא העיקר הגדול שהכל תלוי בו, ואחריה והיה אם שמוע שיש בה צווי על (זכירת) שאר כל המצות, ואחר כך פרשת ציצית שגם היא יש בה צווי זכירת כל המצות.

אע"פ שאין מצות ציצית נוהגת בלילה קוראין אותה בלילה מפני שיש בה זכרון יציאת מצרים ומצוה להזכיר יציאת מצרים ביום ובלילה שנאמר למען תזכור את יום צאתך מארץ מצרים כל ימי חיך, וקריאת שלש פרשיות אלו על סדר זה היא הנקראת קריאת שמע.

Where did the *פס"ק* get this verse from of "In order that you remember the day you left" as the source for remembering the exodus on a daily basis? Notice he does say that it is a commandment to remember the exodus on a daily basis. However, its striking that not only the *פס"ק*, but NONE of the "mitzvah counters" enumerate remembering the exodus daily as one of the 613 commandments!³

3. בערוך השולחן אורח חיים סימן סז סעיף ז איתא בזה"ל, "זכירת יציאת מצרים בכל יום וכן בכל לילה הוי מן התורה כמבואר בגמרא [כ"א]. ופשוט הוא דחייב להזכיר בפה ואינו יוצא בהרהור דהא קיי"ל דהרהור לאו כדיבור דמי ועוד דבכל זכור הכתוב בתורה הפירוש בפה וה"נ כן ומה שמוני המצות לא מנאו זכירת יציאת מצרים בכללי המצות נ"ל משום דבתורה כתיב [דברים טז, ג] למען תזכור את יום צאתך וגו' ולא כתיב בלשון ציוי זכור את יום וגו' אלא הזכירה היא גלל הדברים הקודמים שבפסוק שם ולכן אם כי מן התורה היא אינה נכנסת במנין המצות ויראה לי שזהו ההפרש בין ליל פסח לכל הלילות דלכאורה כיון דגם בלילה חיובא דזכירת יציאת מצרים א"כ איזה הפרש יש אבל לפי מ"ש ההפרש דשם הוה חיוב עצמי והיא מצות עשה גמורה ומנאוה בכלל המצות ועוד הפרשים יש ומבואר במקום אחר [חיובא דיצ"מ דיום הוא כל היום ואם נזכר בבין השמשות מזכירה וחיובא דלילה עד עלות השחר עי' שאגת אריה שהאריך בזה:]

Understanding the Haggadah

7

צהר"ס פסח 56 א-ה

You shall sacrifice the Pesach to Hashem your Lord in the place that Hashem will choose to rest His name there. Do not eat chomeitz on it, seven days eat matzas on it, bread of affliction, for with haste you went out of Egypt, in order that you shall remember the day you went out of the Land of Egypt all the days of your life.

וְזָבַחְתָּ פֶּסַח לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ צֹאֵן וּבָקָר בַּמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר יְקוֹק לְשֹׁכֵן שְׁמוֹ שָׁם: לֹא תֹאכַל עִלְיֵי זֶמֶן שֶׁבַע יָמִים תֹּאכַל עִלְיֵי מַצּוֹת לֶחֶם עֲנִי כִּי בְּהִצְצוֹן יָצֵאתָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לְמַעַן תִּזְכֹּר אֶת יוֹם צֵאתְךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם כָּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ:

Is there a commandment of remembrance in this verse? Does eating matzah on Pesach create a remembrance for the whole year? Every day?

8

תלמוד בבלי אסכת ברכות דף א' ע"א א

Mishnah. We mention the exodus from Egypt at night. Said Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah, "I am like seventy years old, and I did not merit that the exodus from Egypt should be said at night until Ben Zoma expounded it. As it says, 'In order that you shall remember the day you went out of Egypt all the days of your life (Deut. 16).' The days of your life - the daytime, all the days of your life - the nights." The majority of the sages say, "The days of your life - this world, all - comes to include the days of the messiah."

משנה. מזכירין יציאת מצרים בלילות. אמר רבי אלעזר בן עזריה: הרי אני כבן שבעים שנה, ולא זכיתי שתאמר יציאת מצרים בלילות עד שדרשה בן זומא. שנאמר: +דברים ט"ז+ למען תזכור את יום צאתך מארץ מצרים כל ימי חייך. ימי חייך - הימים, כל ימי חייך - הלילות; והכמים אומרים: ימי חייך - העולם הזה, כל - להביא לימות המשיח.

Clearly chazal understood this verse to be commenting on the mitzvah to remember the exodus on a daily basis. But, is this the mitzvah, or does it only, somehow, reflect on, or add a detail to the mitzvah which is found in Shmos?

9

אבילתא צרה' שאמאלו בא - אסכתא צפסחא פסח 56

Moshe said to the nation, "Remember this day that you went out of Egypt etc". We only know that we mention the exodus during the day, from where do we know at night? As it says, "In order that you remember the day you left the Land of Egypt all the days of your life (Deut. 16:3)." The days of your life, the days; all the days of your life, the nights, like the words of Ben Zoma. The majority of sages say: The days of your life in this world, all the days of your life come to include the days of the messiah.

ויאמר משה אל העם וזכור את היום הזה אשר יצאתם ממצרים וגו' אין לי אלא שמזכירים יציאת מצרים בימים בלילות מנין שנאמר למען תזכור את יום צאתך מארץ מצרים כל ימי חייך (דברים טז ג) ימי חייך הימים כל ימי חייך הלילות כדברי בן זומא והכמים אומרים ימי חייך בעולם הזה כל ימי חייך להביא לימות המשיח:

Understanding the Haggadah

From this midrash, we see that the basic source for a daily remembrance is the verse in Shmos (like "רש" said), but the verse in Devarim, reveals to us that matzah is supposed to lead to a remembrance the whole year long = ALL the days of your life. "All" is unnecessary, and comes to include something. According to Ben Zoma, it includes the nights, while others say it includes the days of the messiah. From the fact that the verse desires of us to remember the exodus "all" our days, according to Ben Zoma, indicates that Hashem desires we remember the exodus at night as well as during the day. Therefore, the verse in Shmos is the instruction to mention it on a daily basis, and this verse reveals to us that it is also desired at night.

So if there is no son (or perhaps no one else) to speak to; one is alone on the seder night, is there a mitzvah of מצור' צ"מ, or only the regular מצוה of מצוה that one has the whole year round and fulfills with the third paragraph of מצוה?!

The whole year as well, we do not ONLY mention מצור' in מצוה, we also reference it several other places. Is there an מצוה of מצוה the rest of the year as well?

Understanding the Haggadah

Why are we so focused on the exodus? It was a big miracle, its true, but it seems like we are making a bigger deal out of it than it is. Why is it so critical?

10

ראב"ן שאות פרק ז'

Now I tell you a general principle regarding the reason for many commandments. From the time that there was idolatry in the world, from the time of Enosh, the minds began to become corrupted in belief. Some are deniers of the essential, and say that the world is eternal, they denied God and said He does not exist. Some deny His knowledge of every detail and said, "How could God know and there be knowledge above (Psalms 73:11)?" Some admit there is knowledge, and deny His involvement, and they perceived man like fish of the sea that God pays no attention to, and there is no reward or punishment among them, they said,

"God has abandoned the world (Ezekiel 9:9)." When God desires a congregation or an individual, and does a miracle with them by changing the way of the world and its nature, the fiction of all these perspectives becomes clear to everyone, because an unexplainable miracle demonstrates that the world has a God that created it, and that He has total knowledge, influence and capability. When such a miracle is first decreed from the mouth of a prophet, the truth of prophecy is also validated, that the Lord communicates with man and reveals His secrets to His servants, the prophets; and through this the entire Torah is maintained.

It is for this reason that the verse states regarding the miracles, "In order that you shall know that I am Hashem in the midst of the land (Exod. 8:18)," to demonstrate His influence, for He has not abandoned it to coincidence, like they thought, and He said, "In order that you shall know that the land is Hashem's (Exod. 9:29)", to demonstrate [the] finitude [of the world], for they are His that

created them from nothing, and He said, "So that you shall know that none is like Me in all the land (Exod. 9:14)", to demonstrate His absolute capability for He controls everything, there is nothing preventing him; because the Egyptians either denied or doubted all these things. If so, the great signs and wonders are trustworthy testifiers regarding belief in the Creator and the entire Torah.

ועתה אומר לך כלל בטעם מצות רבות. הנה מעת היות ע"ג בעולם מימי אנוש החלו הדעות להשתבש באמונה, מהם כופרים בעיקר ואומרים כי העולם קדמון, כחשו בה' ויאמרו לא הוא, ומהם מכחישים בידיעתו הפרטית ואמרו איכה ידע אל ויש דעה בעליון (תהלים עג יא), ומהם שיודו בידיעה ומכחישים בהשגחה ויעשו אדם כדגי הים שלא ישגיח האל בהם ואין עמהם עונש או שכר, [יאמרו עזב ה' את הארץ (יחזקאל ט:ט)]. וכאשר ירצה האלהים בעדה או ביחיד ויעשה עמהם מופת בשנוי מנהגו של עולם וטבעו, יתברר לכל בטול הדעות האלה כלם, כי המופת הנפלא מורה שיש לעולם אלוה מחדשו, ויודע ומשגיח ויכול. וכאשר יהיה המופת ההוא נגזר תחלה מפי נביא יתברר ממנו עוד אמתת הנבואה, כי ידבר האלהים את האדם ויגלה סודו אל עבדיו הנביאים, ותתקיים עם זה התורה כלה:

ולכן יאמר הכתוב במופתים למען תדע כי אני ה' בקרב הארץ (לעיל ח יח), להורות על ההשגחה, כי לא עזב אותה למקרים כדעתם. ואמר (שם ט כט) למען תדע כי לה' הארץ, להורות על החידוש, כי הם שלו שבראם מאין ואמר (שם ט יד) בעבור תדע כי אין כמוני בכל הארץ. להורות על היכולת, שהוא שליט בכל, אין מעכב בידו, כי בכל זה היו המצריים מכחישים או מסתפקים. אם כן האותות והמופתים הגדולים עדים נאמנים באמונת הבורא ובתורה כלה:

Understanding the Haggadah

Since the Holy One, blessed be He will not perform a sign or miracle in every generation to the eyes of every wicked person or denier, He commanded us to constantly do a remembrance and sign to that which our eyes saw, and to give it over to our children and grandchildren and their children until the final generation. He was very strict with this matter, like He pronounced *kares* for the eating of chomeitz, and for failure to sacrifice the Pesach, and necessitated that we should write all that appeared to us of the signs and wonders on our arms and on the area between our eyes, and to write it furthermore on the doors of the houses in the doorposts (*mezuzas*), and that we mention this orally in the morning and evening, as it says, “*Emes veyatziv is a Torah law (Berachos 21a)*”, from that which is written, “In order that you remember the day you left the Land of Egypt all the days of your life (Deut. 16:3)”, and that we make a *succah* every year.

So too, similarly there are many commandments that are a remembrance to the exodus from Egypt. It is all so that there should be testimony for us, in all the generations, to the wonders, so that they not be forgotten, and there not be the ability for a denier to open his mouth to contradict belief in the Lord. For one who purchases a *mezuzah* for a small amount of money and affixes it in his doorway and considers its matter, has already admitted to the creation of the world and to the knowledge of Hashem and His influence, and also to prophecy, and expressed belief in all the corners of the Torah, aside from the fact that he admitted that Hashem’s loving kindness is very great towards those who do His will, that He took us out from that slavery to freedom, and it is a great honor to give merit to their forefathers who desired the fear of His name.

ובעבור כי הקב"ה לא יעשה אות ומופת בכל דור לעיני כל רשע או כופר, יצוה אותנו שנעשה תמיד זכרון ואות לאשר ראו עינינו, ונעתיק הדבר אל בנינו, ובניהם לבניהם, ובניהם לדור אחרון. והחמיר מאד בענין הזה כמו שחייב כרת באכילת חמץ (לעיל יב טו) ובעזיבת הפסח (במדבר ט יג), והצריך שנכתוב כל מה שנראה אלינו באותות ובמופתים על ידינו ועל בין עינינו, ולכתוב אותו עוד על פתחי הבתים במזוזות, ושנזכיר זה בפינו בבקר ובערב, כמו שאמרו (ברכות כא א) אמת ויציב דאורייתא, ממה שכתוב (דברים טז ג) למען תזכור את יום צאתך מארץ מצרים כל ימי חיך, ושנעשה סכה בכל שנה:

וכן כל כיוצא בהן מצות רבות זכר ליציאת מצרים. והכל להיות לנו בכל הדורות עדות במופתים שלא ישתכחו, ולא יהיה פתחון פה לכופר להכחיש אמונת האלהים. כי הקונה מזוזה בזו אחרד וקבעה בפתחו ונתכוון בענינה כבר הודה בחדוש העולם ובידיעת הבורא והשגחתו, וגם בנבואה, והאמין בכל פנות התורה, מלבד שהודה שחסד הבורא גדול מאד על עושי רצונו, שהוציאנו מאותו עבדות לחירות וכבוד גדול לזכות אבותיהם החפצים ביראת שמו:

Understanding the Haggadah

Therefore they said (Avos chap. 2 mishna 1), “Be careful with a light commandment as with a severe one,” for all of them are very precious and special; for at all times one admits through them to his Lord. The intent of all the commandments is that we should believe in our Lord and give thanks to He that created us, and that is the purpose of creation, for we have no other reason for the initial creation. The Supreme Lord does not desire the lower beings except that man should know and admit to his Lord that created him. The intent of raising the voice in prayers and the intent of houses of prayer and the merit of the prayer of the masses, this is so that there be for man a place to gather and admit to the Lord that created them and brought them into existence and publicize this and say before Him, “We are your creations.” This is the intention in that which they said, may their memory be for blessing, (Yerushalmi Taanis chap. 2 law 1), “They called out to the Lord with might (Jonah 3:8),” from here you learn that prayer requires voice, the brazen wins over the bashful.

From the great, publicized miracles, man admits to the hidden miracles that are the foundation of the entire Torah. For a man has no portion in the Torah of Moshe, our teacher, until he believes that in all our matters and incidents, that all of them are miracles, there is no nature to them nor way of the world, regarding both the masses and the individual. Rather, if he observes the commandments, his merit will make him successful, and if he transgresses them his punishment will cut him off, all by decree above, as I have already mentioned (Gen. 17:1, Exod.

6:2). The hidden miracles will be publicized, regarding the masses, when the testimonies of the Torah are fulfilled regarding the blessings and the curses, as the verse states (Deut. 29:23,24), “All the nations will say, ‘For what did Hashem do so to this land?’ and they will say, ‘Because they abandoned the covenant of Hashem, the Lord of their fathers,’” the matter will be publicized to all the nations, that it was from Hashem as a punishment. And it stated in terms of fulfillment, “All the nations of the land will see that the name of Hashem is called upon you and they will fear you.” I will further explain this, with help from Hashem (Lev. 26:11).

ולפיכך אמרו (אבות פ"ב מ"א) הוי זהיר במצוה קלה כבחמורה שכולן חמודות וחביבות מאד, שבכל שעה אדם מודה בהן לאלהיו, וכוונת כל המצוות שנאמין באלהינו ונודה אליו שהוא בראנו, והיא כוונת היצירה, שאין לנו טעם אחר ביצירה הראשונה, ואין אל עליון חפץ בתחתונים מלבד שידע האדם ויודה לאלהיו שבראו, וכוונת רוממות הקול בתפלות וכוונת בתי הכנסיות וזכות תפלת הרבים, זהו שיהיה לבני אדם מקום יתקבצו ויודו לאל שבראם והמציאם ויפרסמו זה ויאמרו לפניו בריותיך אנחנו, וזו כוונתם במה שאמרו ז"ל (ירושלמי תענית פ"ב ה"א) ויקראו אל אלהים בחזקה (יונה ג ח), מכאן אתה למד שתפלה צריכה קול, חציפא נצח לבישה (עי' ערוך ערך חצף):

ומן הנסים הגדולים המפורסמים אדם מודה בנסים הנסתרים שהם יסוד התורה כלה, שאין לאדם חלק בתורת משה רבינו עד שנאמין בכל דברינו ומקרינו שכלם נסים אין בהם טבע ומנהגו של עולם, בין רבים בין ביחיד, אלא אם יעשה המצוות יצליחנו שכרו, ואם יעבור עליהם יכריתנו ענשו, הכל בגזרת עליון כאשר הזכרתי כבר (בראשית יז א, ולעיל ו ב). ויתפרסמו הנסים הנסתרים בענין הרבים כאשר יבא ביעודי התורה בענין הברכות והקללות, כמו שאמר הכתוב (דברים כט כג כד) ואמרו כל הגוים על מה עשה ה' ככה לארץ הזאת, ואמרו על אשר עזבו את ברית ה' אלהי אבותם, שיתפרסם הדבר לכל האומות שהוא מאת ה' בעונשם. ואמר בקיום וראו כל עמי הארץ כי שם ה' נקרא עליך ויראו ממך. ועוד אפשר זה בעזרת השם (ויקרא כו יא):

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We have demonstrated that there is a unique commandment from the Torah to be performed on the night of the fifteenth of Nissan, and have drawn some cursory distinctions between this commandment and the daily requirement to remember the exodus. We have also developed an understanding of why the exodus is so critical to Judaism.

We will now return to the verse with which we began our discussion to further understand what elements are necessary to fulfill the commandment of telling over the story of the exodus, in order to understand why the הלצה is formulated in the way that it is.

The verse seemingly stated that one must make a specific statement to his son, "בצורך זה וכי". What does that phrase mean exactly and what does it demand of us?

11

ש"ש אמות פתק א' פסוק ח

For this. In order that I will fulfill His commandments, like these: the Pesach sacrifice, matzah and maror.

Hashem did for me. This hints at the answer to

the wicked son; you should say, "Hashem did for me, and not for you, because if you had been there, you would not have deserved to be redeemed."

בעבור זה. בצורך שאקיים מצותיו, כגון פסח מלח ומרור הללו:

עשה ה' בי. רמז תשובה לצן רשע לומר, עשה ה' לי ולא לך, שאלו היית שם לא היית כדאי ליגאל:

What does בצורך זה mean according to Rashi? Why does he give examples?

The word זה according to the code of the Torah (the midrashic/halachic understanding) always means there is something to point to directly. Many examples of this, like כ' זה האש משה by מ"ס"א by ב"ר זה האש משה. This is why we point in shul אלאת התורה. This being the case, what is the זה in this פסוק ח?

12

פסיקתא זוטרתא (לקח טוב) אמות פתק א' אות ח

You shall tell your son. Possibly the father could begin to tell his son about the laws of Pesach from the beginning of the month, therefore we are taught, "On that day". If we had only been told, "on that day", possibly from earlier in the day, therefore we are told, "for this", at the time when matzah and maror are lying before you.

והגדת לבנך. יכול מראש חודש, יתחיל האב להגיד לבנו הלכות הפסח, ת"ל ביום ההוא, אי ביום ההוא יכול מבעוד יום, ת"ל בעבור זה, בשעה שמצה ומרור מונחים לפניך:

Rashi is clearly understanding the verse based on this midrashic explanation. The midrash understands זה to be something that the father can point to.

Does this mean that part of the telling over of the story is to point to the מצות of the night?

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13

רש"ט פ"ק שאות פתק א' פסוק ח

Because of this. *that Hashem performed miracles for me in Egypt, I serve this service.* בעבור זה. שעשה יי"י לי ניסים ומוצד עבודה בזאת.

According to the רש"ט, the English translation of הצבור is NOT "for", as we would translate it according to רש"ט, but rather "because of". In other words, while רש"ט understands it to mean that the purpose of the exodus was **for** commandments like the מצות of the night of Pesach, the רש"ט understands it to mean that **because** Hashem took us out, we do these מצות.

14

אלן זלרא שאות (פירוש האורח) פתק א' פסוק ח

Because of this. Rabbi Marinus said in explanation of "because of this" that it would have been more appropriate to reverse it, "this is because [of what] Hashem did for me", and he quoted many similar passages to support his opinion. To my mind, however, none of them are correct, because how could we reverse the words of the Living God!? The reason for the verse is the reverse of his understanding; we do not eat matzahs "because of this". Rather the explanation of "because of this" is that because of this service – namely, the eating of the matzah and fulfillment of not eating chomeitz, which are the beginning of the commandments that Hashem commanded us – Hashem performed signs until He took us out of Egypt. The reason for this is because the only purpose of His taking us out of Egypt was to serve Him, as it is written, "When you take the nation out of Egypt, you shall serve the Lord on this mountain (Exodus 3:12)", and it is written, "That I took you out of the Land of Egypt to be for you a Lord (Num. 15:41)".

בעבור זה. אמר רבי מרינוס, פי' בעבור זה, היה ראוי להיותו הפוך זה בעבור שעשה ה' לי. והביא רבים כמוהו לדעתו. ולפי דעתי, אין אחד מהם נכון, כי אין נהפוך דברי אלהים חיים. וטעם הפסוק הפך מחשבתו, כי אין אנו אוכלים מצות בעבור זה, רק פי' בעבור זה, בעבור זאת העבודה שהוא אכילת המצה ולא יאכל חמץ שהוא תחלת המצוות שצוה לנו השם עשה לנו השם אותות עד שהוציאנו ממצרים. והטעם לא הוציאנו ממצרים רק לעבדו, ככתוב בהוציאך את העם ממצרים תעבדון את האלהים על ההר הזה (שמות ג, יב), וכתוב אשר הוצאתי אתכם מארץ מצרים להיות לכם לאלהים (במד' טו, מא):

How is the understanding of the Ibn Ezra different from the רש"ט?

We have three ways to understand the words הצבור זה. And this is what we are supposed to tell the "simple" son, as we will see soon, הצ"ה.

The second point that Rashi made (source #11) addresses how we could lie by saying Hashem did for ME. According to Rashi, it is a hint to the "answer" to the evil son. To understand this comment of Rashi we need more background.

Understanding the Haggadah

In source #5 we saw that there is another verse commanding us to respond to a question by telling the story of the exodus. In fact, there are four places where the Torah requires of us to respond to a “question” by relating various elements of the exodus from Egypt. These four presentations of the exodus are the source for the concept of the “four sons” in the הלצה. Note that not all of these questions are regarding the Pesach sacrifice and are not necessarily asked on the night of the fifteenth.

One wonders why there should be four different ways to present the story of the exodus? Isn't there one official way to tell the story? Is there anything about the presentation of the commandment of מצור or והלצה that indicates there are different ways to tell the story on the night of the fifteenth? What does והלצה mean? Is the commandment to tell the story on the night of the fifteenth **by** reciting this verse? Or, is there more to it than that? Is הלצה in your own words? Does it depend on the listener?

15

צהר'ס נב-כב

When your son will ask you tomorrow saying, “What are these testimonies, laws and judgements that Hashem our Lord commanded you?”, you should say to your son, “We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, and Hashem took us out from Egypt with a mighty hand. Hashem gave signs and wonders, great and punishing, to Egypt, to Pharaoh and his entire household before our eyes. And He took us out of there in order to bring us to, and give us, the land that was promised to our ancestors. Hashem commanded us to perform all these laws to fear Hashem, our Lord, for our benefit for all time, to grant us life like this day. And it will be considered righteousness when we guard to perform this entire commandment before Hashem, our Lord, as He commanded us.”

כִּי־יִשְׁאַלְךָ בִּנְךָ מוֹצֵר לֵאמֹר מִה־הָעֲלִית וְהַזְקַמְתָּ וְהַמְשַׁפְטִים אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֵתְכֶם: וְאָמַרְתָּ לְבִנְךָ עֲבָדִים הָיִינוּ לְפַרְעֹה בְּמִצְרַיִם וַיֹּצִיאֵנוּ ה' מִמִּצְרַיִם בְּיַד זְרוֹקָה: וַיִּצְוֶן ה' אוֹתוֹת וּמִוֶּפְתֹּיִם גְּדֹלִים וְרָעִים בְּמִצְרַיִם בְּפַרְעֹה וּבְכָל־בֵּיתוֹ לְעֵינֵינוּ: וְאוֹתֵנוּ הוֹצִיא מִשָּׁם לְמַעַן הָבִיא אֶתְנוּ לְאֶרֶץ לָנוּ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לְאַבְרָהָם: וַיֹּצִינוּ ה' לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת־כָּל־הַזְּקִימִים הַאֲלֹהִים לִירְאָה אֶת־ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ לְטוֹב לָנוּ כָּל־הַיָּמִים לְיוֹמֵינוּ כִּהְיוּם הַיּוֹם: וְצִדְקָה תִּהְיֶה־לָנוּ כִּי־נִשְׁמֹר לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת־כָּל־הַמִּצְוֹת הַזֹּאת לְפָנֵי ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ כְּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּנוּ:

16

אמות'ה:כב-כג

It will be when you come to the land that Hashem will give you as He spoke and you shall guard this service. It will be when your children will say to you, “What is this service to you?”, you should say, “It is a Pesach sacrifice to Hashem who passed over the homes of the Children of Israel in Egypt when He plagued Egypt and our homes He saved.” (and the nation bowed their heads and bowed down):

וְהָיָה כִּי־תָבֹאוּ אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר יָתַן ה' לְכֶם כְּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר וְשָׁמַרְתֶּם אֶת־הַעֲבֹדָה הַזֹּאת: וְהָיָה כִּי־יֹאמְרוּ אֵלֵיכֶם בְּנֵיכֶם מִה־הַעֲבֹדָה הַזֹּאת לְכֶם: וְאָמַרְתֶּם זְבוּזָפְסוּז הוּא לָהּ אֲשֶׁר פָּסְזוּ עַל־בֵּיתִי בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּמִצְרַיִם בְּנִגְפֵנוּ אֶת־מִצְרַיִם וְאֶת־בֵּיתֵנוּ הִצִּיל (וַיִּקַּד הָעָם וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ):

מִצְוַת אֵילָן-כַּף 56-

It will be when Hashem will bring you to the land of the Kenanni, as He promised you and your forefathers, and gives it to you. You shall transfer every first-born from the womb to Hashem, and every first-born offspring of an animal that you will have, the males, to Hashem. And every first-born donkey redeem with a sheep, and if you do not redeem, break its neck, and every first-born human of your children you shall redeem. It will be when your son will ask you tomorrow saying, “What is this?”, you shall say to him, “With a strong hand Hashem took us out of Egypt, from the house of bondage. And it was, when Pharaoh was stubborn to send us and Hashem killed every first-born in the Land of Egypt, from first-born human to first-born animal, therefore I sacrifice to Hashem all first-born males from the womb, and all first-born sons I redeem. It will be for a sign on your arm and *totafos* between your eyes, because Hashem took us out of Egypt with a strong hand.

וְהָיָה כִּי-יָבִיֵאֵךָ ה' אֶל-אֶרֶץ הַכְּנַעֲנִי כַּאֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לְךָ וְלֹא-אֲבוֹתֶיךָ וַיְהִי־נָתַן לְךָ: וְהִגַּדְתָּ לְכָל-פֶּטֶר-רִיזוֹם לָהּ וְכָל-פֶּטֶר אֵילָן בְּהֵמָה אֲשֶׁר יִהְיֶה לְךָ הַזְּכוּרִים לָהּ: וְכָל-פֶּטֶר זָמִיר תִּפְדֶּה בְשֵׂה וְאִם-לֹא תִפְדֶּה וְעַד-פִּתְיוֹ וְכָל בְּכוֹר אָדָם בְּבִטְוֹ תִפְדֶּה: וְהָיָה כִּי-יִשְׁאַלְךָ בִּנְךָ מָחָר לֵאמֹר מַה-זֶּאת וְאָמַרְתָּ אֵלָיו בְּזִזְק יָד הוֹצֵאתָנוּ ה' מִמִּצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים: וַיְהִי כִּי-הִקְשִׁיהָ פִרְעֹה לְשַׁלְּחָנוֹ וַיְהַרְגֵהוּ ה' כָּל-בְּכוֹר בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבְּכוֹר אָדָם וְעַד-בְּכוֹר בְּהֵמָה עַל-כֵּן אֲנִי זֹבֵחַ לָהּ כָּל-פֶּטֶר רִיזוֹם הַזְּכוּרִים וְכָל-בְּכוֹר בְּנֵי אִפְדָּה: וְהָיָה לְאוֹת עַל-יָדְכֶם וְלְטוֹטְפֹת בֵּין עֵינֶיךָ כִּי בְּזִזְק יָד הוֹצֵאתָנוּ ה' מִמִּצְרַיִם:

מִצְוַת אֵילָן-זֶה 6-

Moshe said to the nation, “Remember this day when you went out of Egypt from the house of bondage, for with a mighty hand Hashem took you out from this; and do not eat *chomeitz*. Today you are going out in the spring month. It shall be when Hashem brings you to the land of the Canaani, Chiti, Emori, Chivi and Yevusi, that was promised to your forefathers to give to you, a land flowing with milk and date-honey, you shall serve with this service in this month. Seven days you shall eat *matzahs* and on the seventh day a holiday to Hashem. *Matzahs* you shall eat for the seven days and no *chomeitz* shall be seen to you and no *se'or* shall be seen to you within your entire borders. You shall tell your son on that day saying, ‘For the sake of this Hashem did to me in His taking me out of Egypt.’ It shall be a sign on your hand and a remembrance between your eyes, in order that the Torah of Hashem will be in your mouth, for with a mighty hand Hashem took you out of Egypt.”

וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל-הָעָם זְכוּר אֶת-הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר יָצִאתֶם מִמִּצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים כִּי בְּזִזְק יָד הוֹצִיא ה' אֶתְכֶם מִזֶּה וְלֹא יֹאכַל זֶמֶן: הַיּוֹם אַתֶּם יֹלָדִים בְּיַוֵּדֵי הָאֲרָבִים: וְהָיָה כִּי-יָבִיֵאֵךָ ה' אֶל-אֶרֶץ הַכְּנַעֲנִי וְהַחִוִּי וְהָאֱמֹרִי וְהַחִיטִּי וְהַיְבוּסִי אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לְאֲבוֹתֶיךָ לָתֵת לְךָ אֶרֶץ זָבֵת חֶלֶב וְדָבָשׁ וְעַבַדְתָּ אֶת-הָעַבְדָּה הַזֹּאת בְּיַוֵּדֵי הַזֶּה: שִׁבַּע יָמִים תֹּאכַל מַצֹּת וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי זֶמֶן לָהּ: מַצוֹת יֹאכַל אֶת שִׁבַּע הַיָּמִים וְלֹא-יֵרָאָה לְךָ זֶמֶן וְלֹא-יֵרָאָה לְךָ שֵׂאֵר בְּכָל-גְּבֻלְךָ: וְהִגַּדְתָּ לְבִנְךָ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא לֵאמֹר בַּעֲבוּר זֶה עָשָׂה ה' לִי בְצֵאתִי מִמִּצְרַיִם: וְהָיָה לְךָ לְאוֹת עַל-יָדְךָ וְלִזְכָּרוֹן בֵּין עֵינֶיךָ לְמַעַן תִּהְיֶה תּוֹרַת ה' בְּפִיךָ כִּי בְיַד נְזֻחָה הוֹצֵאתָ ה' מִמִּצְרַיִם:

Understanding the Haggadah

Why does the author of the *הגדה* list four sons, namely a *תם*, *רשע*, *מכס*, *רשע* and *א"ט יוצא לטאלול*? Where does this classification derive from? What about the question of the *מכס* labels him a *מכס*? What makes the *רשע* a *רשע*? Etc. Are these four sons or two different groups? Pay attention to the way the *תורה* introduces their questions, do you notice anything unusual about the *רשע*? What is the answer to all the questions? Is there anything unusual about the commandment to respond to the *רשע*? Back to "ר", how does our *פסוק* have anything to do with the *רשע*? What does "ר" mean?! Do we see this reflected in our *הגדה*? Why do we do this to the *רשע*? What happened to *ק"ר*?

What requirements can we see in the verse itself based on our discussions?

Lets take a look what the *שנה* requires of us:

19

תלאונו בהל' אסכת פסחים זל קטז צאז א

They pour him a second cup and here the son asks his father. If the son does not have the intellectual capacity, his father teaches him: What makes this night different from all the nights, that on all the nights we eat *chomeitz* and *matzah*, this night entirely *matzah*? On all the nights we eat other vegetables, this night *marror*? On all the nights we eat meat that has been grilled, boiled or roasted in its juices, this night entirely grilled? On all the nights we dip one time, this night two times? His father teaches him according to his intellectual capacity. He begins with degradation and completes with praise, and extrapolates from the section of *Arami oved avi* until he completes the entire section.

משנה. מזוגו לו כוס שני, וכאן הבן שואל אביו. ואם אין דעת בבן אביו מלמדו: מה נשתנה הלילה הזה מכל הלילות, שבכל הלילות אנו אוכלין חמץ ומצה הלילה הזה כולו מצה? שבכל הלילות אנו אוכלין שאר ירקות, הלילה הזה מרור? שבכל הלילות אנו אוכלין בשר צלי שלוק ומבושל, הלילה הזה כולו צלי? שבכל הלילות (אין) אנו (חייבים לטבל אפילו) +מסורת הש"ס: (מטבילין) פעם אחת, הלילה הזה שתי פעמים? ולפי דעתו של בן, אביו מלמדו. מתחיל בגנות ומסיים בשבח, ודורש +דברים כו+ מארמי אובר אבי עד שיגמור כל הפרשה כולה.

Why must the son ask his father? What is this new idea about telling the story with degradation and praise? What is this extrapolation? When is the father going to tell the story?! Where does all of this come from? Is it pure oral law or is there an indication of it from the verses themselves?

Go back to the Rambam (source #3). He tells us the basic mitzvah and proceeds to provide many more details:

ראב"ק הלכות חאל ואנא סרק ל' א-ב

It is a *mitzvah* to inform the children even if they do not ask, as it says, "You shall tell your son," a father teaches his son according to his intellectual capability. How? If he was immature or cognitively impaired, he says to him, "My son, we all used to be slaves in Egypt, like this maidservant or like that slave, and on this night the Holy One, blessed be He redeemed us and freed us." If the son was an adult and wise, he informs him what occurred to us in Egypt, and the miracles that were performed for us through Moshe, our teacher, it all depends on the intellect of the son.

One must make changes on this night so that the children will see and ask and say, "Why is this night different from all the nights?" Until he answers them and says to them such and such occurred, such and such was. How does one make changes? Distribute shells and nuts, and uproot the table from before them before they eat, and grab matzah from one another, and the like. If he has no son, his wife asks him. If he has no wife, they ask each other why is this night different, and even if they were all sages. If he was alone, he asks himself why this night is different.

He must begin with degradation and finish with praise. How? He begins and tells that originally our ancestors, in the days of Terach and earlier, were deniers and erred after vanity and chased after idolatry, and finishes with the true religion, that the Source of Place drew us to Him, and distinguished us from the lost and brought us close to His unity. So too he begins and informs that we were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, and all the evil that they did to us, and finishes with the miracles and wonders that were done for us and with our freedom. This is that he should extrapolate from *Aramy oveid avi* (Deut. 26) until he completes the entire section. Whomever adds and deals at length with the extrapolation of this section, behold he is praiseworthy.

מצוה להודיע לבנים ואפילו לא שאלו שנאמר והגדת לבנך, לפי דעתו של בן אביו מלמדו, כיצד אם היה קטן או טיפש אומר לו בני כולנו היינו עבדים כמו שפחה זו או כמו עבד זה במצרים ובלילה הזו פדה אותנו הקב"ה ויוציאנו לחירות, ואם היה הבן גדול וחכם מודיעו מה שאירע לנו במצרים ונסים שנעשו לנו ע"י משה רבינו הכל לפי דעתו של בן.

וצריך לעשות שינוי בלילה הזה כדי שיראו הבנים וישאלו ויאמרו מה נשתנה הלילה הזה מכל הלילות עד שישלב להם ויאמר להם כך וכך אירע וכך וכך היה. וכיצד משנה מחלק להם קליות ואגוזים ועוקרים השולחן מלפניהם קודם שיאכלו וחוטפין מצה זה מיד זה וכיוצא בדברים האלו, אין לו בן אשתו שואלתו, אין לו אשה שואלין זה את זה מה נשתנה הלילה הזה, ואפילו היו כולן חכמים, היה לבדו שואל לעצמו מה נשתנה הלילה הזה.

וצריך להתחיל בגנות ולסיים בשבח, כיצד מתחיל ומספר שבתחלה היו אבותינו בימי תרח ומלפניו כופרים וטועין אחר ההבל ורודפין אחר ע"ז, ומסיים בדת האמת שקרבנו המקום לו והבדילנו מן התועים וקרבנו ליחודו, וכן מתחיל ומודיע שעבדים היינו לפרעה במצרים וכל הרעה שגמלנו ומסיים בנסים ונפלאות שנעשו לנו ובחירותנו, והוא שידרוש +דברים כ"ו+ מארמי אובד אבי עד שיגמור כל הפרשה, וכל המוסיף ומאריך בדרש פרשה זו הרי זה משובח.

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Understanding the Haggadah

Whoever does not say these three things on the night of the fifteenth has not fulfilled his obligation, and these are they: Pesach, matzah and maror. Pesach for the sake of the fact that the Source of Place, He should be blessed, passed over the homes of our ancestors in Egypt, as it says, "You shall say it is a Pesach sacrifice for Hashem, etc. (Exod. 12)." Bitter herbs for the sake of the fact that the Egyptians embittered the lives of our ancestors in Egypt. Matzah, for the sake of the fact that we were redeemed. All of these entire matters are called *haggadah*.

כל מי שלא אמר שלשה דברים אלו בליל חמשה עשר לא יצא ידי חובתו ואלו הן, פסח מצה ומרור, פסח על שם שפסח המקום ב"ה על בתי אבותינו במצרים שנאמר +שמות י"ב+ ואמרתם זבח פסח הוא לה' וגו', מרורים על שם שמררו המצרים את חיי אבותינו במצרים, מצה על שם שנגאלו, ודברים האלו כולן הן הנקראין הגדה.

How many requirements do we have according to the Rambam? Where did he derive all these obligations from? Note that he concludes the section, by stating that all these requirements are referred to as הלצה. This has many consequences.

First, it is not merely a זכירה, a remembrance. It is a "tale". We must not only mention the fact that Hashem redeemed us, but we must say more, it is a story, a tale, not a few key words to recall the basics.

Therefore, the more one relates, the greater the mitzvah.

The fact that one must point to objects, indicates the timing of the מצוה, and even that the pointing itself is part of the tale (Pesach, matzah and maror).

We saw the midrash that points out the two verses, indicating that even when alone one must relate the tale to himself. From this, we conclude that it is not ONLY education for those that do not know (see next point). Therefore, even the greatest sages must do this.

It would appear that הלצה as the source indicates that the telling of the story of the exodus is not a "recital", but almost the exact opposite. It must be an educational interaction between father and son. This requires curiosity and interest. Therefore, at the very least, the interest of the child must be piqued, and at best, we provoke him to ask questions. This accounts for the "changes" and the מה שתנה. You should not "recite" the הלצה. It is NOT a recital! This also accounts for the four sons. Since this mitzvah is one of education, it needs to be presented to each child in a way that he can understand. The fact that the Torah responds to four different types of children with a certain version of the exodus gives us a model. But the word הלצה is actually the source for this requirement, not the four places (as we pointed out, they are not necessarily even referring to the seder night with their questions).

The Rambam then deals with the story itself. Since we need to tell the tale, we need to know where to begin and where to end! It's not so simple to know where the story of the exodus begins and where it ends. The sale of Joseph? The sin of Adam? In fact, there are different ways to look at the exodus. Was it a physical salvation or a spiritual one? How we view it will drastically change the story, especially in terms of the beginning, and perhaps, the end as well. Perhaps we must look at it both ways?

Understanding the Haggadah

תלמוד בבלי' אסכת פסחים ז' קטז צאז א

He begins with degradation and finishes with praise. What is the degradation? Rav said, "From the beginning our ancestors were idolators." Shmuel said, "We used to be slaves."

מתחיל בגנות ומסיים בשבח מאי בגנות? רב אמר: מתחלה עובדי עבודת גלולים היו אבותינו. [ושמואל] אמר: עבדים היינו.

How does the Rambam relate to this passage of the Talmud? How does he "paskin"?

The Rambam adds a detail. HOW do we tell this tale, not only with two different before and after pictures, but also through the phrase by phrase extrapolation of a specific section of the Torah. Where did he get this from? Go back to source #19, the Mishnah. It is explicit there. What exactly are we supposed to do with this section?

We see that the story is supposed to be told in a very unusual manner. All the details that we have discussed until now have been, I think, straightforward. While we may not have thought to construct the remembrance of the Exodus in exactly this manner on our own, I trust that after we explained it, we have no qualms, and, to the contrary, understand that the structure is actually quite ingenious, facilitating a fuller, clearer understanding of the exodus. The building of curiosity, the awareness of the unique individual needs of each child, the necessity to broaden the story for proper context; this מצוה could easily serve as an educational clinic. However, this last detail seems strange.

How would you think to tell the story? In one's own words (go back to source #4)? Reading the verses? Reading the midrashim? Yet, the מצוה instructs us, and this is how the רמב"ם paskins, as is the structure of our הלצה - to tell the story by reading a phrase from ארא, and explaining the reference with a verse from אנת.

See this in the הלצה.

What is the context of this section in the Torah?

How can we make sense of this manner of "storytelling"?

I would like to offer two suggestions that I heard from my Rebbi. One I will explain now, and the other we will come back to "הלצה".

Bringing the purpose back to the story with aramy

Even according to the opinion that the relating of the story of the exodus must begin with the fact that we were once idolators, the story in the Haggadah does not end with the commandment of mitzvos by Hashem on Sinai! Even the Rambam who writes that the end of the story according to the opinion that we begin with idolatry is that He drew us close to the true religion does not seem to finish the story with Sinai! Apparently, the choice of the Children of Israel by Hashem as His nation and their commitment to Him is sufficient (the poetic dayeinu that mentions many later accomplishments, was a much later addition to the Haggadah). In fact, our story ends primarily on the night of the actual exodus. While it certainly appears strange that, to an extent, the exodus is taken out of context, being that the purpose of the exodus is absent from our story, there is good reason for it.

תלאו זה' אסכת פסח'ם זל קטז צאו א

In each and every generation one is obligated to see himself as if he had departed Egypt, as it says, "You shall tell your son on that day saying, 'For this Hashem did for me when I departed Egypt' (Exod. 13)". Therefore, we are obligated to thank, to extol, to praise, to glorify, to exalt, to beautify, to bless, to raise up and to laud to He that performed for our ancestors and to us, all these miracles. He took us out from slavery to freedom, from suffering to joy, from mourning to holiday, from darkness to great light and from enslavement to redemption, and we will say before Him, praised be God.

בכל דור ודור חייב אדם לראות את עצמו כאילו הוא יצא ממצרים, שנאמר + שמות יג+ והגדת לבנך ביום ההוא לאמר בעבור זה עשה ה' לי בצאתי ממצרים. לפיכך אנחנו חייבים להודות להלל לשבח לפאר לרומם להדר לברך לעלה ולקלם למי שעשה לאבותינו ולנו את כל הנסים האלו, הוציאנו מעבדות לחרות מיגון לשמחה ומאבל ליום טוב ומאפלה לאור גדול, ומשעבוד לגאולה, ונאמר לפניו הללויה.

Earlier we asked if we were supposed to lie when we say this to our son. "ר"ט wrote that this was a hint to the answer to the צ"ר. I would have been redeemed but not him. From the אטנ we see another requirement entirely, namely to view ourselves as having personally experience צ"צא אצ"ר. While this may require much knowledge of what occurred and perhaps great creativity on our part, the benefits of such a perspective cannot be overstated. If one appreciates what the slavery and persecution was, and feels that Hashem saved him from it – and with awesome miracles, his relationship with Hashem will be entirely different.

According to the אטנ, and this is emotionally obvious, the result of this perception is spontaneous song. It is for this reason that the הצ"ה includes ה"ל. You notice that the requirement to sing ה"ל is not in the א"פ. This is because the א"פ is dealing with the מצוה to tell the story, and ה"ל is not part of the story. But this is jumping the gun.

It is perhaps for this reason that we end our story with the occurrences of the night of the fifteenth of Nissan. We synchronize ourselves with that moment in history, and for as long as we can muster, transport ourselves to ancient Egypt. We feel like we are there. This is a novel idea, because while there is a mitzvah to view ourselves this way, it is far from clear that this should impact the mitzvah of telling the story of the exodus. However, if we are truly to view ourselves this way, then we cannot speak about the future that has not yet occurred.

While serving as a mightily successful ploy, it nonetheless comes with the sacrifice of the true culmination of the exodus, namely, the Sinai experience and the giving of the Torah. For this reason, perhaps, we must schlep the Torah back into the seder.

Instead of a simple reading of the related verses from the Torah that describe the story of the exodus in detail, we darshun the story, explaining it phrase by phrase. We read the verses that a farmer would recite upon bringing his first fruits of the year to the Temple in Jerusalem, which relate that he used to be a slave in Egypt, was redeemed by Hashem, and given the land of Israel, enabling him to have his own fields and produce these first fruits. In cryptic shorthand, there are references to various elements of the slavery and redemption in his recital that we expand on and explain by pointing out the corresponding verses in Shmos that relate the story in detail. Why are we doing this?

Instead of reading the verses, we relate the story by learning Torah. If you closed your eyes at this part of the seder, you would think you were in the study hall listening to a passage from the Talmud! Perhaps that is exactly the point – this was the purpose of the exodus, for the Torah – so we relate the story through learning Torah.

Understanding the Haggadah

What do you think is the essential nature, or purpose of the Torah? The story? *ה'רא"ה* is *ה'רא"ה*. So we are to learn what to do. *ה'רא"ה* are the essential way to read *ה'רא"ה*. *ה'רא"ה* is a *ה'רא"ה*. What we take for granted as the *ה'רא"ה*, is not so simple. Sometimes the intended metaphoric meaning is the simple meaning as well. "Heads up!"

23

ה'רא"ה ל'רא"ה ז'ת

The Talmud (Nedarim 38) explains that the verse, "Write for yourselves this song," refers to the entire Torah... yet we have to understand how the entire Torah should be termed a song, since it is not written in the form of a song. Rather, one must conclude that the Torah has the nature and quality of song, which is presentation of information metaphorically. It is obvious that a metaphor differs from a story in prose in two ways: nature and quality.

1) In a song, the topic is not clearly defined as it is in prose, and one must footnote the text; this verse refers to such a story, and another verse refers to something else. **And this is not called homily**, rather that is the nature of song, even a mundane one. It is further understood that to one who knows well the idea that is being metaphorically expressed, sweeter is the enlightening language of song and its precision much more than to an individual that has no knowledge of the details of the idea, and comes only to examine the basic idea from the metaphor, and due to that is likely to assume fictions that never existed and were never intended by the author. So too is the nature of the entire Torah, the story is not clearly defined, rather one has to footnote and extrapolate from nuances in the language, **and this is not called homily, rather this is the simple explanation.** It is further understood that one is unable to come to the exact word of G-d, unless he has in mind some Halachic, ethical point or legend found in our tradition from the sages, may their memory be for a blessing...

והנה בנדרים דל"ח העלו בפ"י המקרא כתבו לכם את השירה, שהוא כל התורה... הא מיהא יש להבין היאך נקרא כה"ת שירה, והרי לא נכתבה בלשון של שירה. אלא ע"כ יש בה טבע וסגולת השירה, שהוא דבור בלשון מליצה. דידוע לכל מבין עם תלמוד דמשונה המליצה מספור פריז בשני עניני: בטבע ובסגולה.

(א) דבשיר אין הענין מבואר יפה כמו בספור פריז וצריך לעשות הערות מן הצד, דזה החרוז כוון לזה הסיפור, וזה החרוז כוון לזה, **ולא מקרי דרוש**, אלא כך הוא טבע השיר, אפילו של הדיוט. ומושכל עוד דמי שידוע בטוב ענין שהביא לידי מליצה זו שנתחבר עליו, מתוק לו אור לשון של השיר ודקדוקה הרבה יותר מלאיש שאין לו ידיעה מתכונת הענין ורק בא להתבונן מן המליצה תורף הענין, ומזה עלול הוא להשערות בדיוות, מה שלא היה מעולם, ולא לזה כוון המשורר. כך הוא טבע כל התורה שאין הסיפור שבה מבואר יפה, אלא יש לעשות הערות ופירושים לדקדוקי הלשון, **ולא נקרא דרוש, אלא כך הוא פשט המקרא.** ומושכל עוד שאין אדם יכול לעמוד על דקדוק דבר ה' אם לא שמכין לאיזה דבר הלכה או מוסר ואגדה הבא בקבלה בדברי חז"ל. ועי' ס' במדבר ז' ז' מש"כ.

(ב) דבשיר יש סגולה לפארה ברמזים מה שאינו מענין השיר, כמו שנהוג לעשות ראשי החרוזים בדרך א"ב או שם המחבר. וסגולה זו מיוחדת במליצה ולא בספור פריז. וידוע דסגולה זו מכרחת הרבה פעמים להמחבר לעקם את הלשון כמעט, רק כדי שיחלו ראשי החרוזים באות הנדרש לו. ודבר זה ממש היא בכה"ת כולה. שמלבד הענין המדובר בפשט המקרא, עוד יש בכל דבר הרבה סודות וענינים נעלמים אשר מחמת זה בא כ"פ המקרא בלשון שאינו מדויק כ"כ. וכ"ז אינו רק בתורה הקדושה, אלא בכל מקראי קודש, כמו שביארנו בס' דברים בפ' שופטים...

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2) A song has a quality that it can be beautified with hints, whose message is extraneous to the topic of the song, for example, the custom to begin the verses with the order of the alphabet, or the author's name. This quality is unique to metaphor, it is not found in prose. It is understood that this quality often forces the author to almost distort his language, merely in order to begin the verse with the desired letter. This is true in the entire Torah as well. Aside from the idea presented in the literal understanding of the verse, in every word there are many secrets and hidden ideas. Due to this, often a verse will be presented in a way that is not entirely precise. This is true not only in the Holy Torah, but in all Holy Works...

*According to the Netziv, the manner of **פזמון** is the intended primary communication of Torah to man. This helps to understand why we resort to **פזמון** to tell the story of the exodus. It is the telling of the tale via the most potent form of **למנוח תורה**. This brings the purpose back into the story without actually discussing Sinai.*

*Now that we have a basic understanding of how to tell the tale of the exodus according to the laws of the Torah - how would you compose the **הגדה**? What would it say? Where would it begin and where would it end?*

*Compare your conclusions to what is actually written in our **הגדה**. Is there a difference? What else does the **הגדה** contain? Why?*

The Structure of the Haggadah

Understanding the Haggadah

The Structure of the *Haggadah* Based on the *Halachah*

The Rambam (*Chomeitz Umatzah 7*) details succinctly the necessary requirements to properly fulfill the *mitzvah* of *sippur yetzias Mitzrayim* – relating the story of the exodus:

What

The basic *mitzvah* is to relate the miracles and wonders that occurred to our ancestors in Egypt. The more he expands in this regard, the more praiseworthy he is.

When

On the night of the fifteenth of *Nissan*, when the (*pesach*) *matzah* and *marror* are before you.

Who

Even the greatest sage, even if no children are present, must relate the story, even to himself.

How

One must relate the story to every child appropriately, according to the manner in which he will understand and appreciate it.

One must do unusual things on this night in order to arouse the curiosity of the children, to the point that they ask why this night is different from all other nights of the year, and you must thereby respond by relating what occurred.

Even if there is no child to ask a question, even the greatest sage must ask, even of himself, if necessary, why this night is so different.

One must relate the story of the exodus by beginning with the degradation of the Jews and complete it with their praise. How do we accomplish that? Both by beginning with the fact that our ancestors were idolators and completing the story that God drew us close to the true religion, as well as by beginning with the fact that we were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, including all the evil that was done to us, and completing the story with the miracles and wonders that occurred to us and our being chosen. This is accomplished by extrapolating phrase by phrase from the section of the *Torah* of *aramy oveid avi*. The more one extrapolates, the more praiseworthy he is.

One must also mention three things to fulfill his obligation: *Pesach*, *matzah* and *maror*, and relate their symbolism.

All of the above is called *haggadah*.

Every generation, an individual must present himself as leaving the slavery of Egypt at this very moment. Therefore, when an individual eats and drinks on this night, he must do so leaning, in a manner of freedom, and must drink four cups of wine.

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Understanding the Basic Obligation

Question and answer

One wonders why we must do strange things to arouse the curiosity of the children, and why is it so significant that each child be addressed in the manner appropriate to him? Why do we not simply direct the story at the lowest common denominator so that everyone will understand? Most surprising is the necessity of *mah nishtanah* according to the Rambam. even if one is alone, he must *ask himself* the *mah nishtanah*!

What emerges from these *halachos* is that the *mitzvah* to tell over the story of the exodus is a *mitzvah* of education. The *haggadah* is **not** a formal recital of an ancient incantation! Reciting the words alone would be to completely miss the point. The reason for the arousal of curiosity, the necessity to address each child in his own way, and the stress on even one alone asking himself the *mah nishtanah*, is because this *mitzvah* is one of education.

Rav Yaakov Weinberg *zt"l* asked why the Torah is compared to water. *Chazal* explain that this indicates that one must be humble in order to acquire Torah. Just like water flows from a higher location to a lower, so too if one makes himself “low”, the Torah will be able to come to him. However, Rav Yaakov Weinberg *zt"l* saw another message as well, related to education:

How many cups of water is one *supposed* to drink daily?

Everyone knows, that every doctor will tell you to drink eight cups of water a day. How many people drink eight cups of water a day? Few, if any. Do you know why so few people drink eight cups a day? Because to drink water, you have to be thirsty. If you are not thirsty, you will not drink.

The job of a teacher in general, and a Torah teacher in particular, is to create thirst for the Torah. If the students are thirsty, they will drink on their own. When one is curious, he searches for explanations, and appreciates the answer. If a child is not curious, there is no question, and little interest, if any. Certainly, the information will not leave a lasting impression.

This is the critical importance of creating curiosity and questions to properly fulfill the *mitzvah* of telling over the story of the exodus. This begins to explain the structure of the *Haggadah*.

The before and after picture

In addition to the necessary question and answer format that the *haggadah* must have, the Rambam also adds another element that one might label the “before and after picture”.

Almost invariably, every ad one sees for a diet regimen comes along with the picture of success – a before and after image. The benefit of this presentation is for the viewer to fully appreciate the effects of the diet. If all one saw was the resulting skinny individual, he would not fully appreciate the value and effect of the diet.

Similarly, the Rambam instructs us to not merely relate the story, but to do so with a before and after picture. We must begin at the low point and finish the story with the high point. However, there is a Talmudic dispute exactly how to do this. One opinion is that the story should reflect the physical slavery and freedom, while the other opinion is that not merely the local physical freedom be related, but the broader picture of how this relates to the relationship between Hashem and the Jewish people. The story therefore must begin with Terach, the father of Avraham being an idolator and, for our purposes, end with the Jewish people being chosen by Hashem. The Rambam tells us to do both. So our *Haggadah* needs to be formatted in this manner as well.

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After seeing the presentation of the Rambam, we can begin to understand the various elements that the *Haggadah* contains. We could now outline the *Haggadah* in the following manner:

- (1) Introduction involving unusual activities intended to arouse the curiosity of the children, followed by their question, *mah nishtanah*.
- (2) The answer to the *mah nishtanah* (*Avadim hayinu*). We already asked what we need the rest of the *Haggadah* for if we just told the story.
- (3) A section relating the various laws of the *mitzvah* to tell over the story of the exodus. Namely, that:
 - (a) There is a *mitzvah* to do this because God took us out.
 - (b) Even the greatest sage must tell the story, even to himself, if necessary.
 - (c) There are four sons, because the story must be individualized.
 - (d) The *mitzvah* is accomplished specifically on the night of the fifteenth of *Nissan*.
- (4) The actual story through the mention of our idolatrous beginnings, followed by the extrapolation of the section *aramy oveid avi* phrase by phrase.
- (5) Mentioning the *pesach*, *matzah* and *maror* and their symbolism.
- (6) Stating the *halachah* that one is required to view himself as personally having left the slavery of Egypt.
- (7) Reciting the first part of the *hallel*.

Understanding the Haggadah

Explaining the Structure of the *Haggadah*

Let's go back to the *Haggadah* and see if we can explain it a little better.

The first unusual occurrence was *karpas*. Perhaps it is sufficient to explain it as a way to arouse the curiosity of the children, the purpose for which was explained above.

Lechem Oni

Next is *yachatz*, when the middle *matzah* is broken. What is the purpose of this activity?

On the most basic level, we have just created the *afikoman*, which gives the children something to do, namely hide it and ransom it.

However, it is worth pointing out that *matzah* is referred to in the Torah as *lechem oni*. The word *oni* has three possible translations, and the term *lechem oni* is therefore explained by *chazal* in three ways:

- (a) *Oni* means suffering. This is the bread of our affliction/suffering. This is what we actually say in the *Haggadah* after we break the *matzah*. This is the “bread of affliction” that our ancestors ate while suffering through slavery in Egypt.
- (b) *Oni* means *Uhni*, a pauper. A pauper is forced to ration his bread, not knowing where his next meal will come from or if there will even be one. Therefore, we express this idea in our *matzah* by rationing it, and putting away the larger part for later.
- (c) *Oni* means response. This is the bread that we “answer a lot of words upon”. We are supposed to say the *Haggadah* on the *matzah*, meaning, while the *matzah* is visible before us. Therefore, for most of *maggid*, we are instructed to uncover the broken *matzah*.

The halachah section

After the *seder* leader has created the proper *lechem oni*, he removes all the food (the *seder* plate) from the table. The moment that the meal would typically begin, it inexplicably seems to end. This is to create the curiosity critical to the educational nature of the *Haggadah*. Therefore, the very next part of the *Haggadah* is the *mah nishtanah*, because the child is supposed to be seriously curious and ask questions by this point.

The answer to his questions would appear to be found in the very next paragraph: *avadim hayinu*, wherein we state that this is all because we were slaves in Egypt and Hashem redeemed us.

Did we fulfill the *mitzvah* of telling over the story by answering the *mah nishtanah*? First of all, that was not much of a story, there were no specifics, but if you insist, I suppose we covered the basic point. Second, what is the rest of the *Haggadah* for? Third, what happened to beginning the story with the broad picture of our beginnings as idolators? We made no mention of that! The truth is, we do mention the degradation of idolatry later in the *Haggadah* – but why don't we mention the degradations in chronological order? Begin that our ancestors were idolators, we ended up in Egypt as slaves, God took us out with miracles and gave us the true religion. How do we explain the convoluted structure of the *Haggadah*?

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Perhaps the “answer” to *mah nishtanah*, is actually not an answer at all. When we say, “We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, but the Lord our God took us out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm”, it is merely the necessary introduction to the “*halachah* section”. We are simply stating that there is a *mitzvah* to tell the story because we were slaves and God took us out. This is not the actual relating of the story. In fact, this seems clear from the continuation of that statement:

We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, but the Lord our God took us out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Had God not taken our fathers out of Egypt, then we, our children and grandchildren would still be enslaved to Pharaoh in Egypt. Even if we all were wise, and perceptive, experienced, and versed in Torah, it would still be our duty to tell about the Exodus from Egypt. The more one talks about the Exodus, the more praise he deserves.

Essentially, this statement is one of *halachah*. One is obligated to tell over this story no matter how well versed he already is. Furthermore, the more one elaborates, the greater the *mitzvah*.

This statement is then followed by a proof. We prove *both* our statements that even the greatest sage must tell the story and also that the more one expands the story the more praiseworthy he is, with a story about the greatest of the sages who spent the whole night involved in “the story”.

It happened that Rabbis Eliezer, Joshua, Elazar ben Azaryah, Akiva and Tarfon were reclining at the seder table in Bnei Brak. They spent the whole night discussing the Exodus until their students came and said to them: “Rabbis, it is time for the recitation of the morning Shema.”

Despite the fact that these individuals were the greatest sages of their generation, they nonetheless related the story to one another to the extent that they completely lost themselves and were unaware of the impending sunrise.

This could explain the next story in the *Haggadah* as well. The next paragraph of the *Haggadah* relates how Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah finally understood that one has a daily *mitzvah* to remember the exodus even at night. One wonders how this story ended up in the *Haggadah*, after all, the *mitzvah* of remembering the exodus daily has nothing to do with the *mitzvah* to tell over the story on the fifteenth. These are two different *mitzvos*, so why mention this here?

If our structure is correct, then it may be here to demonstrate how far the praiseworthy expansion of the story can go. Anything that is a consequence of the exodus is fair game as a fulfillment of broadening our discussion. In fact, according to some versions of the *Haggadah*, this was one of the things discussed at the previously mentioned *seder* in Bnei Brak!

If this is correct, the actual story that is related in the *next* section of the *Haggadah* is, in fact, bookended with degradation and praise, and it is in chronological order, as we suggested it logically should be. After the child asks the *mah nishtanah*, we relate the *halachos* of telling over the story. Namely, that everyone is obligated, that the more the better, every child must be taught appropriately, and that it can only be accomplished on the night of the fifteenth. After we finish relating the *halachos*, the body of the *maggid* section of the *Haggadah* begins with, “Originally our ancestors were idolators” and culminates with the miracles of the exodus, which may well be the praise, or the “after picture” according to both degradations, as the implication of the exodus depends on your focus, but the historical occurrence was the same according to everyone.

The story is now in chronological order. We first mention that we were idolators, followed by the phrase by phrase extrapolation of *aramy oveid avi*, which states that we descended to Egypt where we were enslaved. Then we relate the miracles that occurred as God took us out.

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Once we have completed relating the story, we follow the *halachah* that to properly fulfill *telling over the story*, we also have to point out and explain the symbolism of the items on the table: *pesach*, *matzah* and *maror*.

Finally, the *seder* leader, hopefully, has successfully depicted the exodus in such a way that we feel we can picture it in our minds eye. In fact, he states that we are to view ourselves as personally having left Egypt.

This statement is followed by the *Hallel*. You might have noticed that there is no mention of *hallel* in the presentation of the Rambam regarding the laws of relating of the story of the exodus. The reason seems obvious - *hallel* is not part of the story, it is the result of feeling the reality of the story, as if you have just experienced it yourself. The quality of the *hallel* is in direct proportion to the quality of the relating of the story. *Hallel* is an emotional response to the perception that Hashem just redeemed us from Egyptian bondage.

The outline of the *Haggadah* thus appears as follows:

- I. *Kiddush*.
- II. Activities to arouse the curiosity of the children.
 - A. *Karpas* - dipping a vegetable in salt water.
 - B. *Yachatz* - While being necessary in its own right, it also arouses the curiosity of the children, as we mentioned.
 - C. Removing the *seder* plate.
- III. The child asks *mah nishtanah*.
- IV. Relating the *halachos* of telling over the story:
 - A. Even the greatest of the sages must relate the story.
 - B. The more he expands the story the greater the *mitzvah*.
 1. A story proving the first two points.
 2. A story about remembering the exodus daily, and a proof that we should remember it at night in addition to the day. We suggested this demonstrates how far our expansion can go.
 - C. The four sons - every child must be told the story in a way that he will appreciate. In a word: education.
 - D. *Yachol mirosh chodesh* - The *mitzvah* can only be fulfilled on the night of the fifteenth.
- V. The story itself:
 - A. *Mitchilah ovdei avodah zara* - originally our ancestors were idolators.
 - B. *Aramy oveid avi* - the extrapolation, phrase by phrase, of the story from the passage that a farmer would recite upon bringing his first fruits of the season to the Temple.
- VI. Pointing out the three items on the table and explaining their symbolism.
 - A. *Pesach*
 - B. *Matzah*
 - C. *Maror*

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VII. Stating the result that we should be feeling in our bones by now; the feeling that we personally left Egypt.

VIII. *Hallel* – expressing our joy and thanksgiving to God for taking ME out of Egypt.

Why?

So far, we have only dealt with **what** the structure is. What remains is to explain **why** the *Haggadah* should be structured this way, and, to a degree, its significance.

The structure of the Haggadah is based on a pasuk

The Malbim points out that the structure of the *Haggadah* is patterned after the verse that is the source of the *mitzvah*:

וְהִגַּדְתָּ לְבִנְךָ, בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא לֵאמֹר: בְּעִבּוֹר זֶה עָשָׂה יי לִי, בְּצֵאתִי מִמִּצְרַיִם:

And you shall relate to your son on that day saying: For this, God did for me when I left Egypt:

And you shall relate – Corresponding to this phrase, we state the laws of the telling over (*haggadah*) of the story.

to your son – Based on this phrase, we point out that each child must be addressed in his own way (the four sons).

on that day – Correspondingly, we point out that the *mitzvah* is specifically on the night of the fifteenth.

saying – We then relate the story itself by extrapolation from the phrases of *aramy*.

For this – The word, “this” always indicates the presence of something that can be identified directly and pointed to.

For this refers to the three items that we must identify and explain their symbolism (*pesach*, *matzah* and *maror*).

God did for me – We then mention that one must view himself as personally having been freed from the slavery of Egypt.

when I left Egypt – This refers to *hallel* as the second paragraph of *hallel* begins almost identically, “*When Bnei Yisroel left Egypt...*”.

According to the Malbim, the entire structure of the *Haggadah* is found in the verse that commands its recital.

The necessity for the Haggadah to address every child and built in marbeh

The beautiful explanation of the Malbim notwithstanding, one nonetheless wonders why we get involved with the *halachos* of who is obligated, how to properly relate the story and when, at the time when we are supposed to be *doing* it! It is quite anomalous that we should integrate the study of the laws into the actual performance of the *mitzvah*, and our doing so therefore begs explanation.

Furthermore, it is even more unnerving that one of the *halachos* mentioned therein has nothing to do with the “who, how or when” of telling over the story; namely Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah’s statement regarding how he was convinced that one should remember the exodus on a daily basis even at night. As we mentioned above there are two

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distinct *mitzvos* regarding remembering the exodus. One applies every day of the year, namely *zechiras yetzias Mitzrayim*, remembering the exodus, and the other applies solely on the 15th of Nissan, namely to relate the story of the exodus, *sippur yetzias Mitzrayim*. Rebbi Elazar's *halachah* is regarding the daily *mitzvah*, not the one unique to the *seder* night. Why was this included in the official *Haggadah* of *Pesach*?

The *halachah* section of the *Haggadah* points out that not only is there a *mitzvah* to tell over the story, but whomever expands on it is praiseworthy. Apparently, there is a requirement to relate the basic story, but one can broaden the story and fulfill the *mitzvah* to a greater degree. One wonders how far this expansion goes. Is there a limit to this expansion? Is the relating of the story limited to the story of the exodus itself? What about consequences, both direct and indirect? If we discuss the ultimate purpose of the exodus, namely the giving of the Torah, do we fulfill the *mitzvah* to a greater degree? What about the content of the Torah, its *halachos*? What about the *halachos* of the resulting *mitzvah* to relate the story? Is it possible that through a discussion of the relevant laws of relating the story that we fulfill the *mitzvah* to a greater degree than the story alone?

In fact, the response to the wise son's question, as presented in the *Haggadah*, is:

And you shall also tell him, for example, the laws of the pesach: one may not eat anything after the paschal lamb.

While there is some question as to whence the author of the *Haggadah* derived this answer, we nonetheless see that in addition to the relating of the basic story to the wise son, one should also tell him *halachos*. The implication is that, for the wise son, the relating of *halachos* is at least a fulfillment of expanding the story, if not a necessary element of the presentation of the story itself. For the other children, however, the relating of *halachos* would appear unnecessary, and potentially even inappropriate.

Based on this, we could suggest two reasons for the "halachah section" of the *Haggadah*:

While modern secular media is produced to appeal to the lowest common denominator of viewership, to maximize revenue, the *Haggadah*, *lehavdil*, was produced to enable each individual of every family to fulfill the obligation of relating the story of the exodus. Therefore, it had to be composed in a manner that would allow even the wisest child to be properly educated. Therefore, the *Haggadah* was written with the wise son in mind, not only the others. Our *Haggadah* therefore includes the answer to the wise son, which requires *halachos* in addition to the story of the exodus.

This is not necessarily to the detriment of the other children, however, because, at the very least, there is an expansion of the story as well, with the presentation of the *halachos*. It would appear that there is a built in "expansion" to the story that every Jew fulfills by learning the *halachos* of relating the story.

For these two reasons, namely that the *Haggadah* was written with the wise son in mind, and even without a wise son, learning the laws is at the very least a praiseworthy expansion of the story, the *Haggadah* includes a "halachah section" at the beginning of *maggid*.

It is therefore fascinating that the statement of Rebbi Elazar ben Azariah regarding the daily *mitzvah* of remembering the exodus is included in this section. It would appear that the discussion regarding that *mitzvah* is also a fulfillment of the *mitzvah* to relate the story of the exodus! In fact, some *rishonim* understood Rebbi Elazar ben Azariah to actually have said this the night that he was having *seder* in Bnei Brak with Rebbi Akiva and the other *gedolim*. If that is the case, then the *Haggadah* itself is testifying that his statement is a fulfillment of relating the story. One wonders then, how far the expansion can go.

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Aramy

We have thusfar explained the unusual behaviors that begin the *Haggadah*, as well as the following *halachah* section. What remains to be explained is why we relate the story in the backwards manner of extrapolating *aramy oveid avi* phrase by phrase. Why don't we simply read the appropriate sections from *Shmos* which is where we end up anyway to explain *aramy*!

There are two points that help to provide explanation for this approach. The first of which is the absence of any reference to the ultimate purpose of the exodus, namely the giving of the Torah, and the second relates to the emotional component of the *Haggadah*, the *hallel*.

Bringing the purpose back to the story with aramy

Even according to the opinion that the relating of the story of the exodus must begin with the fact that we were once idolators, the story does not end with the commandment of *mitzvos* by Hashem on Sinai. Apparently, the choice of the Children of Israel by Hashem as His nation and their commitment to Him is sufficient (the poetic *dayeinu* that mentions many later accomplishments, was a much later addition to the *Haggadah*). In fact, our story ends primarily on the night of the actual exodus. While it certainly appears strange that, to an extent, the exodus is taken out of context, being that the purpose of the exodus is absent from our story, there is good reason for it.

The last statement we make before we sing *hallel*, is that we are obligated to view ourselves as having been personally freed from Egyptian bondage. We are therefore trying very hard to relive that experience the best we can. It is probably for this reason that we end our story with the occurrences of the night of the fifteenth of Nissan. We synchronize ourselves with that moment in history, and for as long as we can muster, transport ourselves to ancient Egypt. We feel like we are there.

While serving as a mightily successful ploy, it nonetheless comes with the sacrifice of the true culmination of the exodus, namely, the Sinai experience and the giving of the Torah. For this reason, perhaps, we must *schlep* the Torah back into the *seder*.

Instead of a simple reading of the related verses from the Torah that describe the story of the exodus in detail, we *darshun* the story, explaining it phrase by phrase. We read the verses that a farmer would recite upon bringing his first fruits of the year to the Temple in Jerusalem, which relate that he used to be a slave in Egypt, was redeemed by Hashem, and given the land of Israel, enabling him to have his own fields and produce these first fruits. In cryptic shorthand, there are references to various elements of the slavery and redemption in his recital that we expand on and explain by pointing out the corresponding verses in *Shmos* that relate the story in detail. Why are we doing this?

Instead of reading the verses, we relate the story by learning Torah. If you closed your eyes at this part of the *seder*, you would think you were in the study hall listening to a passage from the Talmud! Perhaps that is exactly the point - this was the purpose of the exodus, for the Torah - so we relate the story through learning Torah.

Aramy as a function of hallel

Even if we accept the above suggestion, that we want to bring the Torah back into the story, why do we do that through the passage of *aramy*? Is there something unique about *aramy* that it was chosen as the means through which to

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relate the story of the exodus?

Rav Soloveitchik would often provide the following explanation. When a farmer would fulfill his *mitzvah* of bringing his first fruits of the seven species of Israel to the Temple, he also had a *mitzvah* to recite the passage of *aramy oveid avi*. The obvious purpose of his recital of this passage, was to arouse his sense of gratitude to Hashem. Only by appreciating the blood, sweat and tears of history, can he truly appreciate how special it is to be able to personally produce these fruits independently, in his own land, and merit to fulfill the *mitzvah* of bringing them to the Temple. His recital of *aramy* is a *mitzvah* of *hakaras hatov* – recognizing favors from others, in this case, from Hashem.

Why do we utilize the passage of thanksgiving for the expression of the story of the exodus?

One part of the *Haggadah* that the Rambam does not mention in his requirements to fulfill the *mitzvah* of relating the story is *hallel*. In chapter 7 of the Laws of *chomeitz umatzah*, he makes no mention of *hallel*. Yet, this is the last thing we do before we begin the meal. Why did the Rambam not mention it?

The answer is that *hallel* is not part of the relating of the story of the exodus. *Hallel* is the result of telling the story so well that one sees himself as having personally been redeemed by Hashem from Egyptian bondage. *Hallel* is an emotional reaction; it is those present at the *seder* spontaneously bursting out in song. This is the goal of the *mitzvah* to relate the story of the exodus. The whole story is supposed to end in a song of thanksgiving to Hashem.

That being the case, there is no better passage with which to relate the story, in the manner of real *limud haTorah* – the authentic style of learning Torah – than the passage of thanksgiving, namely *aramy oveid avi*. Utilizing the passage of thanksgiving, we extrapolate all the details of the exodus so clearly that we feel we were there, and bring ourselves to an acute sense of thanksgiving to Hashem for redeeming us on this very night.

May we all merit to fulfill the *mitzvah* of telling over the story of the exodus in all its details and experience the emotional rush of true thanksgiving with a heart-felt *hallel*.

Next year in Jerusalem! *Chag kasher vesomeach*.