



Whose Haggadah Is It? Exploring the Structure of Maggid

Jews are sometimes referred to as the “People of the Book”, but that description actually sells the Jewish people short. Jews are a people of many books, from the Tanach to the Talmud to the vast library of *sifrei halacha*, *mussar*, and *machshava*. Yet the Haggadah stands out from all these books as unique.

Compiled over the course of hundreds of years in locations throughout the Jewish world, including Israel and both eastern and western Diasporas, it reflects the full spectrum of the Jewish experience. The Haggadah contains bits of Torah, Neviim, Ketuvim, Mishna, Gemara, Aggada, and Midrash. It has mystical poems side-by-side with practical instructions, and Talmudic debates alongside children’s recitations.

At the heart of the Haggadah is *Maggid*, which defines the part of the *Seder* in which we fulfill the mitzvah of *sippur yetziat Mitzrayim* – the recounting of our Exodus from Egypt. With its wealth of stories, songs, and declarations, it is easy to lose ourselves in the magic of the Haggadah and the *Seder* night itself.

In this section of *Pesach-To-Go*, we will take a step back from the stories and look broadly at the very structure of *Maggid*. Together, we will peel back the layers of the Haggadah, present some fundamental questions about its components, and explore and expose its enigmatic structure. We will then consider one possible approach to explaining how the Haggadah we have today came to be, and why.

To start, let’s look at the major sections of *Maggid*, listed on the next page. Do they flow smoothly and rationally into one another? If you were the editor of the *Haggadah*, would you assemble these paragraphs the same way?



The Sections of Maggid

1. מה נשׂתנה - The Four Questions
2. עבדים היינו - The One Sentence Answer
3. ואפילו כלנו חכמים - Even the Wise and Knowledgeable
4. מעשה ברבי אליעזר - The Seder in Bnei Brak
5. אמר אלעזר בן עזריה - Mentioning Yetziat Mitzrayim Throughout the Year - Amar R. Elazar ben Azaryah
6. כנגד ארבעה בנים - The Four Sons
7. יכול מראש חדש - The Timeframe for Reciting Maggid
8. מתחלה עובדי עבודה זרה היו - Our Forefathers were Idol Worshippers
9. ברוך שומר הבטחתו לישראל - The Brit Bein HaBetarim
10. צא ולמד - Exposition of Arami Oved Avi
11. אלו עשר מכות - The Ten Plagues and the ensuing discussion
12. כמה מעלות טובות למקום עלינו - Dayeinu
13. רבן גמליאל היה אומר - Mentioning the Mitzvot of the Night - Pesach, Matzah, U'Maror
14. בכל דור ודור - In Every Generation [a person should see himself]
15. לפיכך אנחנו חייבים להודות - Therefore we must say praise - Preamble to Hallel
16. Hallel

After going through this exercise, you may have noticed the following peculiarities:

- 1) The Haggadah only provides a one-sentence answer to the child's questions. It then goes on a somewhat lengthy tangent regarding the mitzvah of *sippur yetziat Mitzrayim* (the mitzvah of recounting the Exodus from Egypt), which emphasizes a few aspects of the obligation:
 - a. Even the wise and knowledgeable must recount the Exodus, though they are undoubtedly familiar with it.
 - b. It is particularly praiseworthy to spend extra time, even beyond the boundaries of the *Seder*, recounting the Exodus, as we can see from the story of the *Seder* in *Bnei Brak*.



- c. There is a statement from R. Elazar Ben Azariah highlighting the obligation to mention the Exodus every night of the year.
 - d. The section about the four sons stresses the importance of relating to the story of the Exodus to all types of children.
 - e. There is a paragraph stressing the necessity of recounting the Exodus specifically on the night of the *Seder - Yachol M'Rosh Chodesh*.
- 2) The Haggadah then reverses course and provides a much more detailed account of Jewish history, beginning with the period prior to Avraham when "our forefathers were idol worshippers." This would have been a more logical choice with which to begin the Haggadah! Why does the Haggadah start with the Exodus from Egypt and then go back to an earlier period of time? Why isn't the Haggadah organized chronologically?
 - 3) *Dayeinu* is one of the more prominent songs in the Haggadah. While the first stanza mentions the Exodus from Egypt, the rest of the song discusses the benevolence of the Almighty that followed the Exodus from Egypt, and leading all the way to the building of the Temple. It would seem more logical to sing this song together with the other songs at the end of the *Seder*. Why, then, is this song placed in the *Maggid* section when it does not focus on the Exodus from Egypt?
 - 4) There is a statement in the Haggadah that in every generation, one must see himself as if he personally experienced the Exodus. This statement is followed by the statement "Therefore, we obligated to praise etc." The second statement seems to be a non-sequitur. Why does the obligation for one to see himself as if he personally Egypt translate into an obligation to recite Hallel?

The following approach is based on a combination of the comments of a number of commentators. Let's start by presenting the Mishna. The Mishna describes the mitzvah of *sippur yetziat Mitzrayim* even as it describes basic structure of *Maggid*:



1.

They filled a second cup for him. At this stage the son questions his father; if the son is unintelligent, his father instructs him [to ask]: 'Why is this night different from all [other] nights... And according to the son's intelligence his father instructs him. He commences with shame and concludes with praise; and expounds from 'A wandering Aramean was my father' until he completes the whole section. Raban Gamliel used to say: Whoever does not make mention of these three things on Passover does not discharge his duty, and these are they: the Passover-offering, unleavened bread, and bitter herbs... In every generation a man is bound to regard himself as though he personally had gone forth from Egypt, because it is said, (*Exodus 13*) 'And though shalt tell thy son in that day, saying: it is because of that which the Lord did for me when I came forth out of Egypt. Therefore it is our duty to thank, praise, laud, glorify, etc.

Mishna Pesachim 10:4-5

מזגו לו כוס שני וכאן הבן שואל אביו ואם אין דעת בבן אביו מלמדו מה נשתנה הלילה הזה מכל הלילות... ולפי דעתו של בן אביו מלמדו מתחיל בגנות ומסיים בשבח ודורש מארמי אובד אבי עד שיגמור כל הפרשה כולה רבן גמליאל היה אומר כל שלא אמר שלשה דברים אלו בפסח לא יצא ידי חובתו ואלו הן פסח מצה ומרור... 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 חייבין להודות להלל לשבח לפאר וכו'.

משנה פסחים י:ד-ה

The Mishna teaches us five basic principles regarding the structure of *Maggid*:

- 1) *Maggid* begins with the child asking four questions.
- 2) The answer to the child's questions should open with the dishonorable events and conclude with the honorable events.
- 3) There is a requirement to expound on the verses of "*Arami oved avi*."
- 4) Rabban Gamliel requires that one mention the mitzvot of the *Seder* night.
- 5) A person is required to see himself as if he personally experienced the Exodus from Egypt.



The Haggadot of Rav and Shmuel

There is an important dispute between two Talmudic scholars, Rav and Shmuel, regarding the second principle. Exploring this dispute will shed light on the structure of our Haggadah:

2.

He commences with shame and concludes with praise. What is 'with shame'? Rab said: 'Aforetime our fathers were idolaters'; while Samuel said 'We were slave.'

Tractate Pesachim 116a

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

פסחים קטז.

Do Rav and Shmuel really differ on the text of the Haggadah? Rabbeinu Chananel, *Pesachim* 116a, states that nowadays we follow both opinions. According to Rabbeinu Chananel, there is an actual dispute regarding the text of the Haggadah. Following the Mishna's principles, the structures of the two Haggadot are shown on the next page:



Rav

1. מַה נִּשְׁתַּנָּה - The Four Questions
2. מִתְחַלְלָה עוֹבְדֵי עֲבוֹדָה זָרָה הָיוּ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ - Our Forefathers were Idol Worshipers
3. בְּרוּךְ שׁוֹמֵר הַבְּטָחָתוֹ לְיִשְׂרָאֵל - The Brit Bein HaBetarim
4. צֵא וּלְמַד - Exposition of *Arami Oved Avi*
5. רָבוּ גַּמְלִיאֵל הָיָה אוֹמֵר - Mentioning the Mitzvot of the Night - *Pesach, Matzah, U'Maror*
6. בְּכָל דּוֹר וָדוֹר - In Every Generation [a person should see himself]
7. לְפִיכֵן אֲנַחְנוּ חַיִּים לְהוֹדוֹת - Therefore we must say praise - Preamble to Hallel
8. Hallel

Shmuel

1. מַה נִּשְׁתַּנָּה - The Four Questions
2. עֲבָדִים הָיוּ - The One Sentence Answer
3. צֵא וּלְמַד - Exposition of *Arami Oved Avi*
4. רָבוּ גַּמְלִיאֵל הָיָה אוֹמֵר - Mentioning the Mitzvot of the Night - *Pesach, Matzah, U'Maror*
5. בְּכָל דּוֹר וָדוֹר - In Every Generation [a person should see himself]
6. לְפִיכֵן אֲנַחְנוּ חַיִּים לְהוֹדוֹת - Therefore we must say praise - Preamble to Hallel
7. Hallel

Given that we combine Rav's Haggadah with Shmuel's Haggadah, we can now see the structure of our Haggadah starting to form. Our Haggadah starts with Shmuel's Haggadah and then switches to Rav's Haggadah. However, there are still two questions that must be addressed:

- 1) Why is there a long section about the mitzvah of *sippur yetziat Mitzrayim* sandwiched between the Shmuel's Haggadah and Rav's Haggadah?
- 2) Why is Shmuel's Haggadah presented first? Wouldn't it be more logical to place Rav's Haggadah first so that the combined Haggadah would be in chronological order?

In order to answer these questions, we need to analyze the dispute between Rav and Shmuel. On a basic level, Shmuel seems to be focused on providing a direct message to the child. The message is a short and to the point. Rav, however, seems to be focused on presenting the child an answer with some context. According to Rav, merely stating that we were slaves is insufficient to appreciate the Exodus from Egypt. The child must know the events that led up to the slavery as well as the ensuing Exodus.



As such, one would expect Shmuel's Haggadah to be extremely concise, while Rav's Haggadah to be more elaborate. We can now explain the section about the mitzvah of *sippur yetizat Mitzrayim* that is found at the end of Shmuel's Haggadah. While Shmuel does call for a concise Haggadah, he still subscribes to the concept that one is praiseworthy for spending additional time discussing the Exodus. Therefore, Shmuel's Haggadah contains an entire section about the importance of discussing the Exodus beyond what is written in the actual Haggadah - in order to encourage everyone to go beyond the minimum requirement.

This section encourages those who are wise and knowledgeable to participate. It brings a story to support this notion. It shows the requirement to mention the Exodus from Egypt on a nightly basis in order to highlight that on the *Seder* night, one should go above and beyond the minimum requirement. It mentions the four sons in order to illustrate that beyond this minimum requirement, each child should be involved in a personalized discussion that meets the specific needs of the child. Finally, there is a section that states that the mitzvah of *sippur yetziat Mitzrayim* can only be fulfilled on *Seder* night, highlighting the *Seder* night as the quintessential time for discussions about the Exodus.

It is possible that the section about the mitzvah of *sippur yetziat Mitzrayim* is unique to Shmuel's Haggadah and does not appear in Rav's Haggadah. Therefore, when we combine Rav's Haggadah with Shmuel's Haggadah, this section appears in Shmuel's Haggadah.

It should be noted that in Shmuel's Haggadah, this section was probably not placed in between the one-sentence answer of *Avadim Hayinu* and the exposition of *Arami Oved Avi*. It most likely was placed at the end of *Maggid* or at the end of the entire Haggadah in order to encourage further discussion of the Exodus. However, in order to maintain the uniqueness of Shmuel's Haggadah, our Haggadah juxtaposes the section about the mitzvah of *sippur yetziat Mitzrayim* with *Avadim Hayinu*.

R. Avigdor Nevenzahl, *Yerushalayim B'Mo'adeha* (pg. 73) explains why Shmuel's Haggadah is presented before Rav's Haggadah:



3.

Sine we say that among the commandments of the Haggadah there is a rule that we “begin with the negatives” it is necessary that the “negatives” will be **first** – that [the Haggadah] should start with the negatives. And if we were to begin with “From the beginning our forefathers were idol-worshippers, etc.” and we would have told the entire sequence of events from the time of Terach, then by the time we would have gotten to *Avadim Hayinu* it would not have been clear that there is a **beginning** with the negatives, as it would have appeared that *Avadim Hayinu* is the **continuation** of the events from the time of Terach. And if this was so, we will not discharge our obligation according to Shmuel, because according to his opinion we must **begin** with *Avadim Hayinu*. Therefore, we open with *Avadim Hayinu* – in accordance with Shmuel, and in the middle of telling over these events we go back to “From the beginning our forefathers were idol-worshippers, etc.” and then it is clear that we wish to **begin** anew, for we see that in the middle of the story of Egypt we **return** to the time of Terach – out of chronological order, and therefore it is clear that we are now beginning with the negatives – an additional time, in order to discharge our obligation according to the opinion of Rav

Yerushalayim B'Mo'adeha

שמאחר שבמצוות ההגדה נאמר דין "מתחיל בגנות", אי"כ צריך "שהגנות" תהיה **תחילה** – שיתחיל בגנות. ואם היינו מתחילים ב"מתחילה עובדי ע"ז" וכו', והיינו מספרים את השתלשלות העניינים מזמן תרח, אי"כ, כשהיינו מגיעים ל"עבדים היינו", לא היה ניכר שיש כאן **מתחיל** בגנות, שהיה נראה ש"עבדים היינו" הוא **המשך** סיפור העניינים מזמן תרח. ואי"כ לא נצא ידי חובה לדעת שמואל, שע"פ דעתו צריך **להתחיל** ב"עבדים היינו". לכך, פותחים אנו בעבדים היינו – כשמואל, ובאמצע סיפור הדברים חוזרים אנו למתחילה עובדי ע"ז וכו', ואז ניכר שרוצים אנו **להתחיל** מחדש, שהרי באמצע סיפור מצרים שוב **חוזרים** אנו לזמנו של תרח – שלא כפי הסדר, וכך ניכר שעתה מתחילים אנו בגנות – פעם נוספת, כדי לצאת ידי חובה ע"פ דעת רב.

ירושלים במעדיה

One can add that there is an additional element that is gained by placing Shmuel's Haggadah first. Rav's Haggadah is focused on history, context and detail. The section that contains the exposition of *Arami Oved Avi* is found in the Mishna and therefore, it is included in both the Haggadah of Rav and the Haggadah of Shmuel. This section is very detail-oriented and provides contextual information as well. According to Shmuel, this section functions to provide the *Torah Sheba'al Peh* (the oral tradition) regarding the Exodus. According to Rav, this section not only provides the *Torah Sheba'al Peh*, but it also



follows the same theme. Since this section flows better from Rav's Haggadah than from Shmuel's Haggadah, Shmuel's Haggadah was placed first.

Dayeinu and the Preamble to Hallel

We are now left to explain the role of *Dayeinu* in the Haggadah as well as the preamble to Hallel. Let's start with the comments of R. Yitzchak Z. Soloveitchik (cited in *Haggadah Shel Pesach M'beit Levi* Vol I po. 186-187): R. Soloveitchik notes that the requirement to recite Hallel at the *Seder* is fundamentally different than the requirement to recite Hallel throughout the year. The Hallel that is recited throughout the year commemorates a historical event. However, the Hallel that is recited at the *Seder* is based on our obligation to see ourselves as if we personally left Egypt. We have an obligation to re-experience the Exodus. When one experiences a great miracle, there is an obligation to recite Hallel. This type of Hallel is fundamentally different from the Hallel recited throughout the year. [See R. Hirsch's article in *Pesach-to-go* 5766.] The Hallel we recite at the *Seder* is the natural response to our successfully envisioning ourselves as currently experiencing the Exodus. It is the Hallel that one recites when one experiences a miracle.

The comments of R. Soloveitchik explain the connection between the paragraph mandating that we see ourselves as if we left Egypt with the preamble to Hallel. We have an obligation to re-experience the Exodus from Egypt, **therefore**, we are obligated to recite Hallel.

We can take the obligation to re-experience the Exodus one step further. [This following idea is based on an article by R. Moshe Schwerd "*Hallel B'Leil HaSeder*," *Beit Yitzchak* 37:389-417.] There is an opinion in the Talmud Yerushlami, *Pesachim* 10:6, that the Jewish people did not recite Hallel upon leaving Egypt. The Hallel that they recited was the "*shira*" that they recited after the splitting of the sea. We can conclude from this that the obligation to re-experience the Exodus spans the departure from Egypt and the subsequent events up to and including the miraculous parting and crossing of the Sea of Reeds. The Hallel that we recite at the *Seder* is supposed to be the natural response to the entire experience, similar to the original Hallel recited at *Yam Suf*.

Based on this idea, we can also understand the section in the Haggadah about how many *makkot* (punishments) there were at the splitting of the sea. At first glance, the splitting of the sea seems apart from the story of the *makkot* in Egypt. However, based on the aforementioned idea, our obligation to re-experience the



Exodus includes reliving the splitting of the sea, making the calculation of the *makkot* at the sea a relevant and important tool for personally re-envisioning the Exodus in all its parts.

We can now provide a new insight into the meaning of *Dayeinu*. One of the more prominent questions asked on *Dayeinu* is whether it would really have been sufficient to have step A without step B - e.g. would it have been sufficient if G-d would have taken us to Mount Sinai but wouldn't have given us the Torah?

Perhaps the answer is based on the aforementioned idea. *Dayeinu* is not a retrospective analysis of the great miracles that were performed by the Almighty. Rather, *Dayeinu* serves to take the reader through the entire Jewish experience from the Exodus until the building of the Temple. As we re-experience each step, we say *Dayeinu* to echo the sentiments expressed at the time of the original event. It is difficult to argue that there is an actual obligation to re-experience the entire Jewish experience up until the building of the Temple on the night of the *Seder*. Nevertheless, on this night, when we are in the right state of mind to re-experience past events, *Dayeinu* helps us go beyond the requirement and relive the stages leading up to the ultimate purpose of the Exodus, the building of the Temple.

While it is unclear who authored *Dayeinu*, it is appropriately placed in Rav's section of the Haggadah. Like *Dayeinu*, Rav's Hagaddah focuses beyond the events and timeline of the Exodus. In fact, R. Avraham of Vilna (son of the Vilna Gaon) comments that the opening line of Rav's Haggadah (מתחילה עובדי עבודה זרה) (היו אבותינו ועכשיו קרבנו המקום לעבודתו) includes the entire Jewish experience as described above:

4.

And included in this are the events and tests of the lives of the Patriarchs, and what occurred to the children, from the sale of Joseph until the Exodus from Egypt, and all the miracles and wonders that [Hashem] performed for us at the parting of the Reed Sea, and the Manna, and the well [of Miriam] until [Hashem] brought us to Mount Sinai and gave us the Torah and brought us into the land of Israel and built us the Holy Temple to perform His sacrificial service

Geulat Avraham

ונכלל בזה מה שעבר
הנסיונות על האבות ומה
שאירע לבנים ממכירת יוסף
עד יצ"מ וכל הניסים
והנפלאות שעשה לנו בקי"ס
והמן והבאר עד שקרבנו לפני
הר סיני ונתן לנו את התורה
והכניסנו לא"י ובנה לנו את
בית הבחירה לעבוד עבודתו.

גאולת אברה



Conclusion

We should now have a clearer picture of the structure of the Haggadah:

- 1) We open with the four questions, in order to fulfill the words of the verse "*Ki Yishalcha Bincha*"
- 2) The response to the questions comes next. First we get Shmuel's version of the answer to the child together with Shmuel's unique section regarding the mitzvah of *sippur yetziat Mitzrayim*. Following that, we get Rav's version of the answer to the child followed by *Arami Oved Avi*, the detail oriented section of the Haggadah and by the detailed account of the *makkot*.
- 3) Our next section is *Dayeinu*, which places the events of Pesach into a larger historical context: from leaving Egypt, through entering the land of Israel, to the building of the *Beit Hamikdash*. This provides us with an opportunity to experience in our minds the culmination of the redemption, including *Matan Torah* and the *Beit Hamikdash*.
- 4) After *Dayeinu*, we turn to Rabban Gamliel's requirement to mention the rest of the mitzvot of the night, eating *Korban Pesach*, *matzah*, and *maror*.
- 5) Finally, having successfully re-imagined ourselves at the Exodus and beyond, we recite the section about our obligation to re-experience the Exodus with confidence, and then turn to the preamble to Hallel and Hallel itself – the natural response of a person who has in fact lived through such miraculous events.

Sometimes, multiple authors, ideas, and goals cannot coherently coexist within the same document, and the result of such collaboration is a literary Frankenstein – ugly, intimidating, and misunderstood. The *Ba'al Haggadah*, who compiled the opinions of the *Tanaim* and *Amoraim*, is uniquely able to overcome these challenges. Rooted in the mitzvot of the evening, the Haggadah reflects both the immediacy of Shmuel's position and the broad vision of Rav's approach; it includes children, parents and grandparents, sages and saints, simpletons and simple *yiddin*, and the full expression of all of our *mesorah*, from Torah and Talmud to poetry and *piyutim*. Though it may initially appear confusing, once we understand the structure of the Haggadah, we gain access to all the layers of its meaning, and can fully immerse ourselves in the *Chag Ha'Geula* – the Holiday of Redemption.



My Four Sons

An unusual aspect of the mitzvah of telling over the story of the Exodus is the requirement to tell the story to our children. So important is this aspect of *Sippur Yetziat Mitzrayim* that the *Seder* night is filled with rituals like *Afikoman*, *Ma Nishtanah*, and *Karpas* whose very purpose is to arouse the curiosity of children, and draw them into the story.

The Haggadah introduces us to the four general types of children, the *Arba'a Banim* (Haggadah text reproduced below), and tells us that we can reach every one of our children and include them in the mitzvot and the magic of the *Seder* night, so long as we connect to them in ways they can understand and relate to. In this piece, we will explore a couple of approaches to the *Arba'a Banim*, and try and answer not only the analytical questions on the text of the passage, but also the practical questions of how to make the *Seder* night come alive in the eyes of all of our children.

Haggadah Text of the Arba'a Banim

בְּרוּךְ הַמָּקוֹם, בְּרוּךְ הוּא. בְּרוּךְ שֶׁנִּתְּן תּוֹרָה לְעַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּרוּךְ הוּא. כְּנֶגֶד אַרְבָּעָה בָּנִים דְּבִרְתָּה תּוֹרָה. אֶחָד חָכָם, וְאֶחָד רָשָׁע, וְאֶחָד תָּם, וְאֶחָד שְׂאִינֵי יוֹדֵעַ לְשֵׂאוֹל.

תָּם מָה הוּא אוֹמֵר? מָה זֹאת?
וְאָמַרְתָּ אֵלָיו: בְּחִזֵּק יָד הוֹצִיאָנוּ
ה' מִמִּצְרָיִם, מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים.

וְשְׂאִינֵי יוֹדֵעַ לְשֵׂאוֹל -
אֵת פֶּתַח לוֹ, שְׂנֹאֵמַר: וְהַגִּדְתָּ
לְבִנְךָ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא לֵאמֹר, בְּעֶבֶר
זֶה עָשָׂה ה' לִי בְּצֵאתִי מִמִּצְרָיִם.

חָכָם מָה הוּא אוֹמֵר? מָה
הַעֲדוֹת וְהַחֲקִים וְהַמְשָׁפְטִים אֲשֶׁר
צִוָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֲתָכֶם? וְאָף אֶתָּה
אָמַר לוֹ כְּהִלְכוֹת הַפֶּסַח: אֵין
מִפְטִירִין אַחַר הַפֶּסַח אֲפִיקוֹמֵן.

רָשָׁע מָה הוּא אוֹמֵר? מָה
הַעֲבָדָה הַזֹּאת לָכֶם? לָכֶם - וְלֹא
לוֹ. וְלִפִּי שְׁהוֹצִיא אֶת עַצְמוֹ מִן
הַכָּלל כְּפֶר בְּעֶקֶר. וְאָף אֶתָּה
הִקְהַה אֶת שְׁנֵי וְאָמַר לוֹ: בְּעֶבֶר
זֶה עָשָׂה ה' לִי בְּצֵאתִי מִמִּצְרָיִם.
לִי - וְלֹא לוֹ. אֵילוֹ הִזָּה שָׂם, לֹא
הִזָּה נִגָּאֵל.



Let's start by taking a look at the context of the verses that are quoted in the Haggadah (verses are presented in the order that they are written in the Torah). Can you match the questions to each of the Four Sons? How about the answers?

1.

And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you: What mean ye by this service? That ye shall say: It is the sacrifice of the LORD'S passover, for that He passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when He smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses.' And the people bowed the head and worshipped.

Exodus 12:26-27

וְהָיָה, כִּי-יֹאמְרוּ אֲלֵיכֶם
בְּנֵיכֶם: מָה הָעֲבֹדָה הַזֹּאת,
לָכֶם. וְאָמַרְתֶּם זֶבַח-פֶּסַח הוּא
לְה', אֲשֶׁר פָּסַח עַל-בְּתֵי בְנֵי-
יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּמִצְרַיִם, בְּנִגְפוֹ אֶת-
מִצְרַיִם, וְאֶת-בְּתֵינּוּ הִצִּיל;
וַיִּקַּד הָעָם, וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲווּ.

שמות יב:כו-כז

2.

And thou shalt tell thy son in that day, saying: It is because of that which the LORD did for me when I came forth out of Egypt.

Exodus 13:8

וְהִגַּדְתָּ לְבִנְךָ, בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא
לֵאמֹר: בַּעֲבוּר זֶה, עָשָׂה ה' לִי,
בְּצֵאתִי, מִמִּצְרַיִם.

שמות יג:ח

3.

And it shall be when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying: What is this? that thou shalt say unto him: By strength of hand the LORD brought us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage.

Exodus 13:14

וְהָיָה כִּי-יִשְׁאַלְךָ בִּנְךָ, מָחָר--
לֵאמֹר מַה-זֹּאת: וְאָמַרְתָּ
אֵלָיו--בְּחֹזֶק יָד הוֹצִיאָנוּ ה'
מִמִּצְרַיִם, מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים.

שמות יג:יד



4.

When thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying: 'What mean the testimonies, and the statutes, and the ordinances, which the LORD our God hath commanded you? Then thou shalt say unto thy son: 'We were Pharaoh's bondmen in Egypt; and the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand. And the LORD showed signs and wonders, great and sore, upon Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his house, before our eyes. And He brought us out from thence, that He might bring us in, to give us the land which He swore unto our fathers. And the LORD commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that He might preserve us alive, as it is at this day. And it shall be righteousness unto us, if we observe to do all this commandment before the LORD our God, as He hath commanded us.'

Deuteronomy 6:20-25

כִּי-יִשְׁאַלְךָ בֶּןְךָ מָחָר, לֵאמֹר:
 מָה הָעֲדוּת, וְהַחֻקִּים
 וְהַמִּשְׁפָּטִים, אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ,
 אֲתָכֶם. וְאָמַרְתָּ לְבִנְךָ,
 עֲבָדִים הָייִנוּ לְפָרְעֹה בְּמִצְרָיִם;
 וַיֹּצִיאֵנוּ ה' מִמִּצְרָיִם, בְּיַד
 חֲזָקָה. וַיִּתֵּן ה' אוֹתוֹת וּמִפְתֵּי
 גְדֹלִים וְרָעִים בְּמִצְרָיִם, בְּפָרְעֹה
 וּבְכָל-בֵּיתוֹ--לְעֵינֵינוּ. וְאוֹתָנוּ,
 הוֹצִיא מִשָּׁם--לְמַעַן, הִבִּיא
 אֶתָנוּ, לְתֵת לָנוּ אֶת-הָאָרֶץ,
 אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לְאַבְרָהָם. וַיֹּצִיֵנוּ ה'
 לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת-כָּל-הַחֻקִּים הָאֵלֶּה,
 לִירְאָה, אֶת-ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ--לְטוֹב
 לָנוּ כָּל-הַיָּמִים, לְחִיַּתְנוּ כְּהַיּוֹם
 הַזֶּה. וְצִדְקָה, תִּהְיֶה-לָנוּ: כִּי-
 נִשְׁמַר לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת-כָּל-הַמִּצְוָה
 הַזֹּאת, לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ--
 כְּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּנוּ.

דברים ו:כ-כה

As you can see, the text of the Haggadah does not correspond to the text of the Torah! This is only one of the questions that we can ask to begin our exploration of the *Arba'a Banim*:

- 1) The section starts with the introductory passage of "*Baruch Hamakom*." What is the significance of this introduction?
- 2) From where do we learn that there are four types of children? Why not three or five? Is there a source within our tradition for the number four?
- 3) Why are these four types of children chosen to represent all children? Would other categories have been more appropriate?
- 4) Why are the four children presented in this order?



- 5) In the Haggadah, the answer (statement) to the *tam* and the *she'aino yodei'a lishol* is taken directly from the Torah. However, the answer that is given to the *chacham* and the *rasha* is different from the answer that the Torah provides. Why does the Haggadah provide different answers than the ones found in the Torah?
- 6) Both the *chacham* and the *rasha* use the second-person tense to refer to the activities of the *Seder* (e.g. "What did Hashem command you", rather than "What did Hashem command us"). Why is the *chacham* praised for his question and the *rasha* chastised for his?
- 7) The response to the *rasha* and the *she'aino yodei'a lishol* are quotations of the exact same verse. Why is the verse interpreted one way for the *rasha* and another way for the *she'aino yodei'a lishol*?
- 8) What is the meaning of the answer to the *chacham's* question?
- 9) What exactly is the give and take between the *rasha* and his father?
- 10) Why do the responses to the *chacham* and the *rasha* begin with "*v'af ata,*" and you (should) also", or perhaps, "and even you should"?

To answer these questions, we will present some general approaches to this part of the Haggadah, and then answer some of the specific questions.

The Approach of R. Abarbanel

R. Yitzchak Abarbanel, in his work, *Zevach Pesach*, notes that the word בן (son) is mentioned in all of the four passages presented above, and that this is the source for the position that there are four different types of children. In three of the passages the child asks a question and in the one of the passages there is no question, just a response (והגדת לבנך). This prompted the author of the Haggadah to conclude that one of the four children does not ask a question, thus he included the *she'aino yodei'a lishol* as one of the four children of the Haggadah.

R. Abarbanel explains that there are four components to every object or event that one may take interest in: *chomer* (material-what are its basic elements?), *tzura* (design- how was it designed?), *po'el* (designer- who designed it?) and *tachlit* (purpose- what was the ultimate purpose of designing it in this manner?). Using



these four components, R. Abarbanel explains the question and answer of each of the four sons. [For purposes of clarity, the explanations will be presented in reverse order from that of the Haggadah.]

The She'aino Yodei'a Lishol

The *she'aino yodei'a lishol* does not show any interest in the proceedings of the *Seder*, even after seeing the many ways that the *Seder* night differs from all other nights. The Haggadah indicates that the father must at least explain to him the relationship between the *chomer* (i.e. the mitzvot of the night) and the Exodus. That is why the *she'aino yodei'a lishol* is told "בעבור זה" - it is because of this" - a direct reference to the mitzvot of the night. The father points to the symbolic items on the table and tells the child that we have prepared these items and placed them before us because the Almighty took us out of Egypt. The visual presentation should allow him to understand the association between the mitzvot of the night and the Exodus, at least on the level of *chomer*.



The Tam



The *tam* only shows interest in the *chomer* by asking "what is this?" His question is very basic. He wants to know why these various items are on the table. Like with the *she'aino yodei'a lishol*, the father is instructed to challenge the child to understand both the question at hand and to reach for a deeper understanding. Therefore, the *tam* is told that the mitzvot of the night are there to commemorate the fact that the Almighty took us out of Egypt. Unlike the *she'aino yodei'a lishol*, the stress is on the *po'el* (designer). The *tam* must understand that it is the Almighty who took us out of Egypt. [R. Abarbanel does not address the reference to the

Almighty in the answer to the *she'aino yodei'a lishol*. Perhaps R. Abarbanel's motivating factor is the emphasis of the answer. Certainly, the responses of the father can be understood on many levels. However, the response to the *she'aino yodei'a lishol* emphasizes the *chomer* and the response to the *tam* emphasizes the *po'el*.]



The Rasha

The *rasha* seems to be branded as a wicked person simply by virtue of the fact that he refers to his relationship to the mitzvot in the second person, thereby excluding himself. The obvious problem is that the *chacham* also uses the second person when asking his question. R. Abarbanel notes three important differences between the *chacham's* question and the *rasha's* question. First, the Torah phrases the question of the *chacham* as a question: "כי ישאלך בנך," when your child shall ask you. The Torah phrases the question of the *rasha* as a statement: "כי יאמרו עליכם בניכם," when your children shall say. This implies that the *rasha* is not really interested in an answer, but rather, is asking a rhetorical question. Second, the *chacham* mentions that the mitzvot are a commandment of the Almighty, whereas the *rasha* does not. Third, the *chacham* refers to the mitzvot as *eidut* (testimony) to the Almighty's intervention in the Exodus.



The *rasha* addresses the *chomer*, the *po'el* and the *tachlit* (purpose), but he does so tersely. He refers to the *chomer* by stating "מה העבודה הזאת," what is this service? He then refers to the service as "לכם," for you. By stating that the service is for you he is denying the fact that these mitzvot were commanded by the Almighty (*po'el*). Furthermore, he is questioning the purpose (*tachlit*) of the mitzvot by implying that his family is eating the *Korban Pesach*, the matzah and the maror simply because these items taste good. The *rasha* tries to claim that his family holds this service every for only one purpose- their own personal pleasure.

According to R. Abarbanel, **the answer to the *rasha's* question is the exact response that is written in the Torah.** He is told that the meat is not just part of a generic service. It is the *Korban Pesach* (זבח פסח הוא). This addresses the *chomer*. He is then told that the sacrifice is an offering to the Almighty (לה'). This addresses the *po'el*. He is then told of that the purpose of the *Korban Pesach* is to commemorate the fact that the Almighty spared the Jewish firstborn while all of the Egyptian first born perished (אשר פסח על בתי בני ישראל וכו'). This addresses the *tachlit*.

In addition to providing the *rasha* with the appropriate response, the Haggadah encourages the father to blunt his teeth (ואף אתה הקהה את שיניו). The term "blunt his teeth" is the equivalent of the modern expression "give him a taste of his own medicine." Just as the *rasha* used the second person in order to exclude himself,



the father borrows the answer given to the *she'aino yodei'a lishol* to rebuke the *rasha*. The father's interpretation, "לי ולא לו," (for me and not for him) was never meant as an authentic interpretation of the pasuk "בעבור זה, עשה ה' לי". It only serves to put things in perspective for the *rasha*, who claims that the *Seder* is "לכם לך" – for you, not for him.

The Chacham



The *chacham's* question encompasses the range of laws relating to Pesach. He asks regarding the mitzvot that constitute *eidut* (testimony) such as the *Korban Pesach*, the *matzah*, and the *maror*, all of which serve as testimony to the story of the Exodus. He asks regarding the *chukim* (the laws don't have a perceived explanation) such as the law that one may not break the bones of the *Korban Pesach*. He asks regarding the *mishpatim* (the laws with a perceived explanation) such as the law that only Jews may eat the *Korban Pesach* (because the *Korban Pesach* is only for those who are part of the nation that experienced the Exodus).

According to R. Abarbanel, **just like the response to the *rasha*, the answer to the *chacham's* question is the response that is written in the Torah.** Only after one provides the answer that is written in the Torah should one also (*v'af ata*) teach the *chacham* the laws of Pesach. Based on the response provided in the Torah, one can now see the answer to the *chacham's* question as well as his interest in all four components mentioned above.

The beginning of the response addresses the *eidut*. It states that we were slaves in Egypt (עבדים היינו לפרעה במצרים), which is the reason for the *Korban Pesach*, the *matzah*, and the *maror*. It then states that G-d took **us** out of Egypt (ואותנו הוציא), which addresses the *mishpatim*, by stating that we were taken out of Egypt and therefore, we are the only people who are commanded to perform these *mitzvot*. It then addresses the *chukim* directly: לעשות את כל החקים האלה.

R. Abarbanel's four components of interest are also addressed in the answer. The child is told what the *chomer* is: "את כל המצוה הזאת." This refers to all of the mitzvot of the night. The Almighty is mentioned as the *po'el* who commanded these mitzvot (ויצונו ה' לעשות את כל החוקים האלה). The ultimate purpose (*tachlit*) of these mitzvot is provided "ליראה את ה' אלקינו לטוב לנו לחינתו כהיום הזה" (to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that He might preserve us alive, as it is at this day). The *tzurah* (design) is addressed by describing how the Almighty designed the mitzvot of Pesach- by utilizing all three types of mitzvot, *eidut*, *chukim*, and *mishpatim*.



The Approach of K'li Yakar

R. Shlomo Efraim of Luntchitz, *K'li Yakar* to Shemot (12:26 and 13:14) disagrees with R. Abarbanel's interpretation. He does not provide any specific objections but rather states that R. Abarbanel's approach does not "speak to the heart." *K'li Yakar* then presents an alternative approach that answers many of the same questions. For purposes of presentation, we will present the *chacham* and the *tam* together and the *rasha* and the *she'aino yodei'a lishol* together.

The Chacham and the Tam

The question of primary interest to *K'li Yakar* is what indication does the Torah give that the *chacham* and the *tam* are righteous children? He suggests that both the *chacham* and the *tam* only ask their questions after the event (מחר - the next day). They do not ask these questions while they are being told about the mitzvot. Rather, they perform the mitzvot without asking any questions. By showing interest in the mitzvot after they perform the mitzvah, they brand themselves as righteous people. *K'li Yakar* shows from the context of the verses of the *chacham* and the *tam* that this is the attitude that they have towards mitzvot in general and not limited to the mitzvot of the *Seder*. By contrast, regarding the *rasha* and the *she'aino yodei'a lishol*, the verse which contains their answer states that the answer should be given on that day (ביום ההוא). They must receive a response immediately because delaying the response constitutes a missed opportunity. The nature of this missed opportunity will be discussed further in the next section.

K'li Yakar then discusses the answer that is given to the *chacham*. The *chacham's* question is about *eidut*, *chukim* and *mishpatim*. *Eidut* refers to the *Korban Pesach* in Egypt that served as the symbol that it is the Almighty that rules the world. *Chukim* refers to the matzah. *K'li Yakar* does not define *chukim* as laws that do not have a perceived reason. Rather, he defines *chukim* as mitzvot with limits. Matzah has that quality in that matzah has very strict limits such that if one does not bake the matzah properly, it becomes *chametz*. *K'li Yakar* also notes that the strictures of matzah represent humility. *Mishpatim* refers to the maror. The Egyptians were punished harshly (אעשה בהם שפטים) because they treated the Jewish people harshly (וימררו את חייהם - they made their lives bitter).

The *chacham's* question places the *Korban Pesach* first (*eidut*), then the matzah (*chukim*) and then the maror (*mishpatim*). This is based on the order of the verse (Shemot 12:8) "And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and



unleavened bread; with bitter herbs they shall eat it." However, the father is instructed to explain to the child that in reality, these three items should be presented in the reverse order. The maror, which represents suffering and the purging of iniquities, comes first. This experience leads one to the humility represented by the matzah. Only after one acquires humility can he come to a true understanding of what it means that the Almighty runs the world. This is the message of the *Korban Pesach*. The Haggadah shows that this idea is evident in the *halachot* of Pesach as well. The Mishna, *Pesachim* 119b, states that one may not eat anything after eating the *Korban Pesach* (אין מפטירין אחר הפסח אפיקומן). The reason is that the taste of the *Korban Pesach* should remain in one's mouth. Similarly, the message of the *Korban Pesach* should be the last message after one internalizes the messages of the maror and the matzah.

K'li Yakar then sources this idea in the answer that is provided in the Torah to the *chacham*. First, he is told about the suffering of the Jewish people while they were slaves in Egypt (עבדים היינו לפרעה במצרים). Next, he is told about the matzah, the *chukim* which lead one to humility through the fear of the Almighty (ויצוינו ה' (לעשות את כל החוקים האלה ליראה את ה' אלקינו ויצוינו ה' (וצדקה תהיה לנו) which comes as a result of observing the mitzvah of *Korban Pesach* (כי נשמור לעשות את כל המצוה הזאת), the mitzvah which epitomizes Divine providence.

Rasha and She'aino Yodei'a Lishol

The central question in dealing with the *rasha* and the *she'aino yodei'a lishol* is that the response they receive comes from the same verse. Why do they basically receive the same response? Why doesn't the *rasha* receive the response that is written in the Torah? Does the choice to give the *she'aino yodei'a lishol* the same answer as the *rasha* imply that the *she'aino yodei'a lishol* is unrighteous?

K'li Yakar explains that there is a difference between the verb אמר and the verb הגיד. Both translate as "to say," but they have different connotations. אמר usually connotes speaking to someone in a friendly tone. הגיד can sometimes connote a friendly tone and can sometimes connote a harsh tone. Similarly, the term לי that is mentioned in response to the *rasha* and the *she'aino yodei'a lishol* can have two connotations. If the one receiving the response considers himself part of the nation of Israel, the response can be interpreted as: 'these were the mitzvot that were commanded to me at the time of the exodus, and if you were there, you would have also participated.' If the one receiving the response does not consider himself part of the nation of Israel, the response can be interpreted as:



'these were the mitzvot that were commanded to me at the time of the exodus, and if you were there, you would not have been redeemed.'

K'li Yakar (in his third answer) explains that the initial response to the *rasha* is to explain to him in a friendly way, (אמר) the idea of the *Korban Pesach*. Therefore, he is answered with the verse that the Torah provides as the answer " **וְאָמַרְתָּ תָּם זִבְחֵהוּ** " (That ye shall say: It is the sacrifice of the LORD'S Passover). If he is unreceptive to the friendly explanation then he should be told in a harsh tone (והגדת) that if he were there, he wouldn't have been redeemed.

Regarding the *she'aino yodei'a lishol*, it is difficult to determine whether his silence is due to his inability to ask a question or whether he is apathetic to Judaism. *K'li Yakar* suggests that the answer provided to the *she'aino yodei'a lishol* is appropriate regardless of why he is silent. If he is silent due to his inability to ask a question, then והגדת is applied in a friendly tone and the *Korban Pesach*, matzah and maror are used as a visual aid to teach the child the basics of the exodus. However, if in fact he is apathetic, then his response is similar to that of the *rasha*.

Conclusion: Educating our Children

This section of the Haggadah opens by praising the Almighty as "*HaMakom*." R. Yosef D. Soloveitchik (*Harerei Kedem*, Vol. II p.215) notes that the term "*Makom*" is not commonly used to describe the Almighty. It is usually reserved to praise the Almighty in situations when He performs an act that transcends nature. R. Soloveitchik suggests that the term "*HaMakom*" is used here to show that the fact that the Almighty coordinated the Exodus so that one can explain its concepts to all types of children truly transcends nature

R. Abarbanel's approach highlights the fact that the concepts of the *Seder* should be presented on various qualitative levels. The duty of the parent (or teacher) is to educate the child in a way that is appropriate for his level, yet challenges him. Furthermore, the answer to a child's question should not only address the question but should provide an additional insight that extends beyond the dimension of the question.

K'li Yakar's approach provides a specific method of dealing with the *rasha*. He espouses the approach of trying to teach him in a warm and friendly manner. When that method proves ineffective, the father should change his rhetoric and speak in a harsher tone.



It is worthwhile to note the comments of the Vilna Gaon regarding how to deal with the *rasha*. The Vilna Gaon notes that the father says לי ולא לו (for me and not for him) as opposed to לי ולא לך (for me and not for you). According to the Vilna Gaon, the answer to the *rasha*'s question is not directly addressed to the *rasha*, but rather to the other members of the family. The *rasha* receives the message indirectly.

Raising and educating our children is an awesome responsibility, but also an incredible opportunity. Pesach, and particularly the night of the *Seder* represents a special chance to take a step back from our daily efforts to instill strong Jewish values and a commitment to Torah and mitzvot and reach out to our children in a different way. The transcendent story of *yetziat Mitzrayim* has something to say to every single person, from the simplest Jew to the wisest scholar. If we take the time and effort to step into our children's shoes and see the world from their point of view, we can answer their questions, satiate their curiosity, and even inspire them to take steps beyond their comfort zone and discover new depths and exciting avenues of *Avodat Hashem*.

Chag Kasher V'Sameach to you, your family, and all of *Klal Yisrael*.

לשנה הבא בירושלים!