

daf yomi summary

parashat Vayikra 5781

פסחים קי - קיג

EDITION: 60

PESACHIM 117, HALLEL THANKS TO RABBI HORWITZ

The Gemara in Pesachim daf 117 goes through a lengthy discussion as to who composed the Hallel that we recite on Yom Tov. Did David Hamelech compose the Hallel, or was it Moshe and the Jewish people?

The Gemara concludes that Moshe and the Jewish people composed the Hallel when they were saved from the Egyptians at the splitting of the sea. The Gemara also states that the prophets enacted a mitzva of reciting Hallel in two circumstances; on every Yom Tov, and when the Jews are saved from danger of death.

My Rosh Yeshiva, Rav Moshe Meiselman, a scion of the Brisker Soloveitchik dynasty, explains that the nature of these two Hallel is very different. The Hallel that we recite on Yom Tov is an expression of shevach, whereby we praise Hashem for sanctifying the day and giving it to us as a beautiful gift.

The Hallel that we recite for being saved from death is an expression of hoda'ah, thanksgiving, where we use Hallel to express our gratitude to Hashem for saving us from danger.

There is a question as to why we only recite half Hallel on the middle days and last day of Pesach, while we recite the full Hallel on all the days of Sukkot. The Tur answers that each day of Sukkot has its own unique sanctity and therefore each day is like a separate Yom Tov.

The days of Pesach, on the other hand, are not individual Yom Tovs but rather a continuum of the Chag of the first day and therefore we only say full Hallel on the first day. However, there is a midrash that gives a different answer. The Midrash asks why it is that we don't say full Hallel on the seventh day of Pesach due to the salvation that we experienced at the splitting of the sea, for the splitting of the sea took place on the seventh day of Pesach.

The midrash answers with the same argument that Hashem gave to the angels when they too wanted to say Hallel. Hashem admonished them that since the Egyptians were being killed at the sea it would be inappropriate to sing Hallel. Although the Jews were being saved, the salvation was tainted with the tragedy of the Egyptians' demise. We too therefore cannot say a complete Hallel on the seventh day of Pesach.

This explanation however is difficult, because the gemara on page 117a says that the Jewish people recited the entire Hallel when they were saved at the sea! The fact that the Egyptians died was not considered a reason to curtail their Hallel, so why were the Angels denied saying Hallel and why are we denied saying full Hallel?

Rav Meiselman explains that the Hallel of salvation, which is the Hallel of thanksgiving, can only be recited by those who experienced that salvation. The Jews who went through the sea and were saved, can sing a full Hallel, but we, the descendants who did not experience the salvation firsthand cannot recite the Hallel of thanksgiving, only that of shevach which can only be recited on a full Yom Tov with its own unique sanctity, which the seventh day of Pesach does not possess.

But if this is true that we can only recite the full Hallel of salvation if we experienced that salvation firsthand, then why do we recite full Hallel on Seder night? The Jewish people said Hallel on Seder night while the first born were dying, because although there was the tragedy of death, the Jews experienced salvation and could therefore sing a full Hallel. But we who did not experience the liberation from bondage on that night, should not be allowed to sing a full Hallel, just as we don't sing a full Hallel on the seventh day for being saved at the sea.

The answer to this question is utterly amazing! The Mishna on page 116a says, "In every generation, each of us has to look at himself as if he left Egypt..."

On seder night it wasn't only our ancestors who were saved and left Egypt. We left Egypt! And if we indeed left Egypt, then we experienced the salvation as well and therefore we must recite the full Hallel of thanksgiving, even though it was coupled with the tragic death of the Egyptian first born.

However, on the seventh day of Pesach, when we commemorate the salvation at the sea, we are not commanded to view ourselves as if we went through the sea. Therefore, we cannot recite the full Hallel of thanksgiving since we did not experience that salvation firsthand!

May we merit to reach this level of experience on seder night, where we are bursting with thanks to Hashem for taking us out of Egypt, that the song of our full Hallel should pierce the heavens and bring our final redemption, Amen!

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THURSDAY 11 MARCH
THANKS KAROLYN BENGER

פסחים קי

“One should not eat in pairs nor drink in pairs...” Our gemara begins with this cautionary statement and highlights the various dangers that result from imbibing and eating in pairs. Interestingly, the text isn’t concerned about eating or drinking excessively; rather, it is only concerned whether the amount consumed in a pair. Accordingly, it is better to drink three cups of wine than two.

Why? Why are we cautioned against fulfilling our needs in pairs? Inherently, I associate a pair as balanced. Shouldn’t we strive for balance in all we do: measuring our emotions, our desires, and finding, as Rambam would say, the Shvil Kazahav, a “middle path”? In balancing our needs and wants we temper ourselves, find stability, and are “centered”.

Perhaps there is something about imbalances that is worth exploring. The brilliance in Avraham was his faith and understanding in one G-D and not two pairs or multiple Gods: A sun G-D, a rain G-D, a G-D for good and one for evil was the prevalent religious ideology of the time. Avraham changed that promoting the existence of THE only and THE one Hashem.

Thousands of years later many were driven to the philosophy of dualism, and believed in two G-ds as it was their rational way to reconcile good and bad. How can the same G-D be just, merciful, honest and compassionate??

It is this rational need that forces many others to defines רכש and שנוע simply as punishment and reward. Man too is not a perfect being. Although created בצלם אלוקים, man is not entirely complete as an individual without a companion. In fact, we are commanded to marry -- to find completion through finding a pair.

This seems contrary to the message of the text: avoid pairs. Yet the concept of עזר כנגדו and the perfect unity between man and wife is represented by the male/female single unit created by G-D in Gan Eden. It is this balance and completion we strive to achieve in our marriages.

Life challenges us to reflect on our own imbalances and what they look like? We must understand that we will never be perfect beings but we are all unique individuals, imbalanced in our own unique and highly imperfect ways. It is this journey for perfection that we struggle to achieve which is really unattainable.

Maybe we are overly angry, frivolous, or excessive. Perhaps we are quick to anger, jump to conclusions, or are disengaged and unaffected by injustices. Whatever imperfection and flaw we may have we all have at least one. We are all perfectly imperfect. Our imperfections are part of what make us unique and thoroughly human. They are what makes us as Hashem created us to be: imperfect. Yet, with the goal to fulfill our mission and full unique potential in our lifetime.

FRIDAY 12 MARCH
THANKS STEVE WIND

פסחים קיא

The Gemara teaches how to handle situations with demons. Although this is generally uncommon nowadays, the guidance is timeless.

One case the Gemara gives regards two women sitting on opposite sides of a crossroads facing each other in a way that shows they are engaging in witchcraft. What is the remedy for one who walks by?

If there is another route, take it. (The Gemara’s advice: avoid risky situations in the first place, if possible.) And if there is no other route, if there is another person with him, they should hold hands and switch places. (The Gemara’s advice: if a risky situation is unavoidable, use the buddy system for protection.)

And if there is no other person with him, he should name the demons invoked by witches and say they will be killed by arrows. (The Gemara’s advice: when one is compelled to confront a dangerous situation alone, he should do his best and Hashem will do the rest.)

The Gemara says that Abaye was walking with Rav Pappa on his right and Rav Huna the son of Rav Yehoshua on his left. Abaye saw a certain demon coming on his left side and he switched Rav Pappa to his left and Rav Huna the son of Rav Yehoshua to his right. Rav Pappa asked: Why were you not concerned about any possible harm to me?

Abaye said to him: "The time is in your favor," implying that demons are less likely to harm one who is enjoying success. (The Gemara’s teaching: we must protect the most vulnerable first - which we can all appreciate in the current vaccine distribution.)

SHABBAT 13 MARCH
THANKS SHULIE MISHKIN -
WWW.SHULIEMISHKINTOURS.COM - WHAT HAVE WE LOST?

פסחים קיב

The date is Nisan 71 CE. You are one of the lucky survivors of the Great Revolt and the horrific destruction that came in its wake. And yet you don’t feel very lucky. How can it be possible to celebrate Pesach this year? Pesach’s essence, as we have been discussing for many, many pages already, is the Passover sacrifice offered in the Temple. The whole holiday revolves around it - getting to Jerusalem, making sure you are part of a group, offering the sacrifice, and then eating it together with your family while reciting Hallel that “raised the roof.” What kind of Pesach can there be without a Temple?

This was the tragic circumstance that the rabbis of Yavneh had to deal with in those first years after the Temple was destroyed in the year 70. A Pesach without a sacrifice must have been inconceivable to most people. Perhaps there was a danger of losing the celebration altogether. The rabbis bravely came together and took what could be salvaged: the commandments to eat matzah and maror, to tell the story and to sing the Hallel - and created a new “seder,” an order for the evening. This seder, as we have seen, took elements from the Greek/Roman symposium but imbued them with deep Jewish symbolism and content.

The focus was on education. The children needed to be kept awake and asking questions. It seems unlikely that even the most apathetic children needed to be prodded awake on Pesach night in the time of the Temple. There was so much to see and notice! Who needs a “ma

nishtana” when everything is different from the familiar. But in the house, things had to be changed from the normal “boring” holiday celebration so that they would ask questions.

The seder, which is laid out here in our tenth chapter of Pesachim, is well planned, with breaks for drinking, eating, teaching and praising. The rabbis mentioned in this chapter: Rabban Gamliel, Rabbi Akiva, Rabbi Tarfon, Rabbi Eliezer ben Zadok - are almost all from the generation of Yavneh, the site of the Sanhedrin right after the destruction of the Temple. However, even with the best efforts of the rabbis to create an “alternate” Pesach celebration, the loss of the Temple was felt keenly. One way to ease that loss was to eat a meal similar to that eaten in the Temple. The Mishna tells us:

“In a place where people were accustomed to eat roasted meat on Passover evenings, one may eat it. In a place where people were accustomed not to eat, one may not eat it.” (Mishna Pesachim 4:4)

The Mishna is talking about the era after the Temple had been destroyed. Could one eat roasted meat, such as was eaten in the Temple, in his own house? Today, most communities do not do this, but the Mishna is familiar with a situation where people did eat roasted meat in memory of the sacrifice. In fact, as great a leader as Rabban Gamliel did so, against the majority opinion, after the Temple was destroyed. (Betzah 2:7) What is the problem that the rabbis have with such a custom? While on the one hand it seems like a beautiful way to perpetuate the tradition of the Temple, it also looks like we are making a sacrifice outside the Temple, something that is forbidden.

A similar problem arose during Temple times. We have testimony that Todos, a resident of Rome, roasted a goat and told the other Roman Jews to do so as well. (Pesachim 53) The rabbis got angry with him because it looked like a sacrifice outside the Temple. Here the situation is that the Temple is standing, however these Jews are far away. To assuage their loneliness at not being able to be in Jerusalem, they ate a “Temple-like” meal.

According to Zeev and Shmuel Safrai, the custom of eating roasted meat persisted in the land of Israel for many generations after the Temple was destroyed. Their evidence is haggadot from the Cairo Genizah that include the question in the “ma nishtana” about how we eat all roasted meat tonight, a question we no longer ask. One Haggadah even had a blessing that said, “Blessed are you G-d, Who commanded us to eat matzah, maror and roasted meat”.

Jews eventually got used to the situation of a seder at home, and the idea of a sacrifice and Temple seemed strange. In that sense, the rabbis did too good a job. We pray at the end of the seder, “Next year in Jerusalem!” but it seems unreal to us. Rabbi Yoel Bin Nun in a seminal article from a few decades ago, calls on us to understand what we are missing. Pesach without the Temple (like Yom Kippur, his other example) is missing its very essence, its very soul. We have lost the “Chag haPesach,” the holiday of the sacrifice on the 14th of Nisan, and are left only with the “Chag haMatzot,” the week-long abstaining from chametz. We need to return to the air of Jerusalem and the Temple.

Let’s finish up Masechet Pesachim with the prayer we recite at the end of the Maggid section of the Haggadah:

“Blessed are You, Lord our G-d, King of the universe, who redeemed us and redeemed our ancestors from Egypt, and brought

us on this night to eat matza and marror; so too, Lord our G-d, and G-d of our ancestors, bring us to other appointed times and holidays that will come to greet us in peace, joyful in the building of Your city and happy in Your worship; that we shall eat there from the offerings and from the Pesach sacrifices, the blood of which shall reach the wall of Your altar for favor, and we shall thank You with a new song upon our redemption and upon the restoration of our souls. Blessed are you, Lord, who redeemed Israel.”

Hadran alach masechet Pesachim!

SUNDAY 14 MARCH

THANKS BENNY LAST

פסחים קיג

The previous two dafim focused on precautions and warnings to avoid danger. A prevalent example is the risk of the existence of pairs (odd numbers are safer), and of demons, (who seem partial to the shade).

Our daf moves onto more general advice, which in today’s jargon may loosely be referred to as ‘life-coaching’. Halfway down 113b, the Gemara quotes a Braita that tells of three groups that hate each other, and that there is constant fighting within the group. They list dogs, roosters and chabarin (chabarin are variously described as descendants of Persia, a tribe living close to Persia, or a section of the Persian priesthood).

The Braita continues, adding that some say ‘also harlots’, and some also add ‘the Torah scholars of Bavel’. Well, we can understand the first four, but how can we understand the great Torah scholars who gave us the Talmud Bavli being part of this unsavoury list? Rashi, in explaining a Gemara in Kiddushin (30b) helps us to understand this seeming paradox.

The Gemara says that a father and his son, or a Rabbi and his student are sometimes referred to as ‘enemies’ (Tehilim 127). This is when they are learning Torah together and they are arguing vehemently, but of course they don’t hate each other, they are just competing to arrive at the truth, and it gives the appearance of enmity. However, we are still left with three questions: the Braita does actually say that the ‘Talmidei Chachamim of Bavel’ hate each other, it specifically mentions the scholars of Bavel (with no mention of Israel), and it adds them to a list of animals, renegade Persians and harlots, which at the very least hints at some degree of negative connotation. Perhaps the answer lies in a Gemara in Sanhedrin (24a).

The Gemara lists the Talmidei Chachamim of Israel as the Tana’im, and the Talmidei Chachamim of Bavel as the Amora’im, and goes on to say that the Torah scholars in Israel were pleasant to each other when they argued about Torah law.

However, the Amora’im in Bavel were no longer able to reach the deep understanding and agreement on Torah law in a pleasant and loving atmosphere. They needed the more fiery approach of confrontation which could and possibly did lead to ill-feeling, which is what our Gemara is referring to.

While of course their actions were totally for the sake of discovering the real Emet, the Gemara is not pardoning their behavior, as they are being held to a very high standard.

MONDAY 15 MARCH

THANKS

פסחים קיד

Rav Rosner notes a point of interest from the mishna where it says **מזגו לו** - they poured (wine) for him, as the source to what we do at **ליל הסדר** whereby we don't pour our own cups of wine. We understand this to be an expression of freedom / royalty that we enjoy at **ליל הסדר**. This is brought down in **שולחן ערוך תע"ג**.

The mishna teaches us that even if we only have lettuce as the single vegetable at **ליל הסדר** we are still obligated to dip it twice - the reason being that it will pique the interest of the children. The message from the mishna is that we are so focused on the children that we must have two vegetables, even if it results in eating the maror out of sequence! The background of the sugya is based on **מצוות צריכות כוונה**

We already saw on daf 108/109 that we should have nuts and sweets at **ליל הסדר** for the sake of the kids and **חספ** more than any other **הג** is child focused as one of main **מצוות לבנך** is **הגדת** the transmission of the **הרוסמ** to the next generation. This is why the **רשב"ם** says it's important not to spend too long on **מגיד** as need to ensure you get to the **מעשה מצוות** part before the kids fall asleep!

TUESDAY 16 MARCH

THANKS DAVID GROSS

פסחים קטז

Among the myriad of sugiyot of the actual seder, we need to consider the mode in which both matza and maror are eaten, and how one can fulfil one's obligation of both mitzvot. The Gemara informs us that if one swallowed matza without chewing, one nonetheless fulfils the mitzva of eating matza. If one swallowed maror without chewing, however, one does not fulfil one's obligation.

The Gemara then informs us that if one were to swallow them together simultaneously without chewing, then one would have fulfilled the mitzva of matza, but not of maror. The fourth scenario contemplated in the Gemara is if they are eaten wrapped in a type of fibrous plant, i.e. swallowed but not chewed, then one fulfils neither mitzva.

The Rishonim divide into two general camps: Rashi, Rambam and the Rokeach have a version of the Gemara where they hold that if one swallows matza, one fulfils the mitzva. This is also the case if one swallows maror, because it is impossible that they won't taste the maror in a small amount. Rabbeinu Chananel and the Rosh have a version of the Gemara that if one swallows maror, one does not fulfil the mitzva as one needs to taste the maror and one cannot do so without chewing. The latter opinion regarding maror is endorsed by the Shulchan Aruch.

The concept itself of combining matza and maror is disputed in the Gemara due to the concern that the two mitzvot are in conflict, in addition to the fact that in a post Temple age, matza remains a Torah-mandated commandment, and maror is only a Rabbinically mandated commandment. Our practice therefore reflects that we do eat the Korech in deference to the opinion of Hillel, but we do so without a bracha.

The Rashbam is of the opinion that while the confluence of the mitzvot does not preclude the possibility of eating them together, neither does there exist an obligation to do so. Tosfot, by contrast, hold that a confluence of mitzvot can cancel each other out, and therefore the Torah specifically mandates the eating of matza and maror together to show us that it specifically permitted and even required. Tosfot go on to explain according to Hillel, that if one were to eat the matza and maror separately, one would fulfil the mitzva a posteriori.

WEDNESDAY 17 MARCH

THANKS TO RAV JONNY SOLOMON -
[HTTPS://RABBIJOHNNYSOLOMON.COM/](https://rabbijohnnysolomon.com/)

פסחים קטז

The Mishna (Pesachim 10:5) found in today's daf (Pesachim 116b) contains the remarkable teaching - which was to then become incorporated into the Haggadah text and which has since inspired many people to dramatize their home seder experience - that: "In each and every generation a person is obligated to see themselves as if they have just come out of Egypt."

Over the years I have read many interpretations of these words. However, the following explanation from Rabbi Shimon Schwab (1908-1995) speaks deeply to me. Here is the insight as recorded by Rabbi Paysach Krohn (in his 'Along the Maggid's Journey' pp. 268-289): "In a lecture on the Haggadah and Pesach, Rabbi Shimon Schwab recounted a searing incident from his youth that, while painful to recall, was filled with his typical unusual insight.

When he was nine years old in Frankfurt, Germany, Rabbi Schwab contracted whooping cough, which causes shortness of breath, swelling of the facial veins, and violent coughing spells. At the time, the standard treatment was to have the patient inhale hot vapours from the spout of a kerosene-heated kettle. As young Shimon bent over the pot, it tipped over, and the scalding hot water, along with some kerosene, poured over his left arm, burning him badly. He screamed from the pain and cried incessantly. After what seemed an eternity, a doctor arrived. He spread ointments and salves on the raw surface of the burned arm, and eventually the sharp pain subsided. However, his arm remained discoloured for a full year until the skin regenerated and returned to its natural colour.

More than half a century later, R' Schwab recalled the incident to the group he was teaching and said, pointing to his left arm, 'If I tell you today that this is the arm that was burned, I am telling the truth. Yet in actuality, not one cell that existed in my arm then is in my body today... Nevertheless, it is fair to say that this arm I am showing you now, even though it is three times the size it was then, is the same one that I burned as a youngster.'

Rabbi Schwab used this episode to illustrate a point in the Haggadah. 'The... Haggadah, citing the Mishna in Pesachim 116b, instructs us that 'In each and every generation, a person is obligated to see themselves as if they have just come out of Egypt'. How can I view myself that way?

I wasn't there, my father wasn't there, and neither was my grandfather. Yet in a sense we were all there, because the generations that actually left Egypt reproduced and recreated themselves until our very day. And so, as we look at ourselves today, we - the offspring of that generation - can say that we indeed left Egypt."