

during the day both on Pesach Rishon and Pesach Sheni. But there is no Seder on Pesach Sheni; only in the evening of Pesach Rishon — when there is a Seder — is Hallel said.

The Talmud 85b, in the name of Rabbi Yohanan in the name of Rabbi Shimon Ben Yehotzadak (the same names as in the statement about Hallel in *Taanit* and *Arakhin*), quotes a verse in Yeshayahu 30:29: “You will have a song like the night when a holiday is sanctified.” Only on a night that has been made into a chag will you sing Hallel. Pesach is the holiday of Jewish redemption. Pesach Sheni is not that holiday; it only grants permission to bring the Korban a month later.

Saying Hallel at night is associated with redemption. After the splitting of the sea, when the Israelites were fully free from the Egyptians, they responded in song. Not only the men, but the women led by Miriam, joined in the song. While at the time of Yeshayahu, King Hizkiyahu failed to respond to Hashem’s saving Yerushalayim with song, at the time of the ultimate redemption we will respond properly.

Pesach was the time of the original redemption and it will be the time of the final redemption. The two-part recital of Hallel becomes clear. The first part relates to our being redeemed from Egypt; that part concludes the Haggadah. After the meal begins the anticipation. We recite the Hallel of the future of the ultimate redemption. The long interruption represents our lengthy wait. The Hallel of this night is not like any other Hallel in our history. It is a song, sung by men and women alike, to be completed by the final redemption.

Yetzias Mitzrayim and Everyday Miracles

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The Haggadah constitutes a fulfillment of the mitzvah of *sippur yetzias Mitzrayim*, entailing a broad and detailed accounting of all the events surrounding the geula from Mitzrayim. Consequently, the Haggadah teaches us about the descent of Klal Yisrael into slavery, the suffering that they endured, and the unfolding of the geula as Hashem revealed Himself and redeemed His people.

However, Rav Soloveitchik noted that this description only captures the first part of the Haggadah, concluding with the second of the four *kosos*. This section of the Haggadah concludes with the first two paragraphs of Hallel, (*Hallelu Avdei Hashem* and *Bi'tzeis Yisrael Mi'mitzrayim*), in which we express the elation of the redemption as if we were experiencing it ourselves. After matzah, maror, korech, the seudah, afikomen, and birchas hamazon, we take the Haggadah in hand once again, but with a different focus. The praise in the remainder of Hallel, in contrast with the first two paragraphs, does not relate specifically to yetzias Mitzrayim, but rather to the multifaceted ways in which we see Hashem’s Providence. We then say *Hallel Hagadol* (Tehillim 136), in which we thank Hashem for a wide range of kindnesses, encompassing both a historical perspective as well as an appreciation for everyday *hashgachah* (providence). This section of the Haggadah is brought to a

dramatic culmination with the tefilla of *Nishmas*, in which we give voice to our realization that we owe Hashem unending gratitude for life itself, including the wondrous functioning of the limbs and organs of the human body. *Nishmas kol chai tevareich es shimcha Hashem Elokeinu* — we join together with all living beings in thanking our Creator for our very existence.

In contrast with the first part of the Haggadah, this latter segment has little to do with yetzias Mitzrayim. At first glance, this seems to be out of place, as the theme of the evening is geulas Mitzrayim.

Rav Soloveitchik¹ referenced a ruling of the Rosh, codified in the *Shulchan Aruch* (O.C. 218:5), regarding the beracha one must say when arriving at the place where he experienced a miracle. The Rosh asserts that someone who has experienced numerous miracles and arrives in a place where one of them occurred must also make mention of the other miracles and incorporate them into the same beracha. The individual who experiences special *hashgachah* is compelled to reflect upon all of the instances that Hashem intervened to save him from danger, and include them in his expression of gratitude.

Applying this principle to the night of the Seder, we are to recognize that thanking Hashem for the miracles of geulas Mitzrayim must inevitably lead us to a broader appreciation for Hashem’s constant kindness and Providence. The recounting and experience of yetzias Mitzrayim brings us to contemplate the many salvations that we have experienced throughout history, and the ongoing daily miracles that comprise life itself.²

This interpretation of Rav

Soloveitchik is rooted in a famous formulation of the Ramban, in discussing the tenet that routine life is filled with ongoing concealed miracles, occurring solely through Hashem's will but experienced as natural incidences. He writes (Shemos 13:16):

ומן הנסים הגדולים המפורסמים אדם מודה
בנסים הנסתרים שהם יסוד התורה כולה.

*From the great and famous miracles,
a person will come to acknowledge
concealed miracles, which are the
foundation of the entire Torah.*

The Ramban presents clearly and succinctly the idea, formulated by Rav Soloveitchik, that revealed miracles constitute a wakeup call that must inspire us to a heightened awareness and appreciation for the everyday miracles that we experience.

This theme is reflected in the concept of *semichas geula li'tefilla*, the obligation to commence Shemoneh Esrai immediately after relating geulas Mitzrayim. The Gemara (*Berachos* 4b,9b) attributes great significance to this halacha. Rabbenu Yonah³ cites a Midrash which states that upon seeing the supernatural miracles of Mitzrayim, klal Yisrael attained and embraced a broader and more encompassing trust in Hashem. This also elucidates the pasuk (Shemos 14:31):

וַיֵּרָא יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת הַיָּד הַגְּדֹלָה אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה
ה' בְּמִצְרַיִם וַיֵּרְאוּ הָעָם אֶת ה' וַיֹּאמְרוּ בְּה'
וּבְמִשְׁפַּחַת עֲבָדָיו.

*And when Israel saw the wondrous
power which G-d had wielded against
the Egyptians, the people feared G-d;
they had faith in G-d and in G-d's
servant Moses.*

Rabbenu Yonah explains that upon seeing the supernatural miracles in Mitzrayim, klal Yisrael attained

emunah, faith in Hashem and reliance upon Him, that permeates every aspect of life.

With this, Rabbenu Yonah illuminates the meaning of *semichas geula li'tefilla*. When elaborating on and contemplating geulas Mitzrayim, the individual attains a deeper understanding of the ongoing *hashgachah* that we experience from moment to moment. Envisioning the care that Hashem demonstrated for the plight of Bnei Yisrael in Mitzrayim and reflecting upon the impact of the tefillos that precipitated the geula, we discover a newfound recognition of Hashem's ongoing concern for us and the potency of our own tefilla. With this perception and outlook, we approach Hashem. Our tefilla is now framed with the profound perspectives that life itself is comprised of ongoing *hashgachah* and concealed miracles, that we are completely reliant on Hashem for every aspect of our existence, and that Hashem cares about us and is attentive to our needs. Such a tefilla, emerging from this internalization of the profound lessons of yetzias Mitzrayim, is elevated to a lofty level.⁴

Chazal⁵ gave dramatic expression to the relationship between the wondrous miracles of yetzias Mitzrayim and the hidden miracles that accompany us throughout our seemingly ordinary lives. The Midrash comments on the apparently incongruous juxtaposition in Tehillim 136 of thanking Hashem for saving us from our enemies (וַיִּפְרְקֵנוּ מִצְרֵינוּ) and providing daily sustenance (נָתַן לָחֶם לְכָל בָּשָׂר כִּי לְעוֹלָם). The Midrash declares that this demonstrates that Hashem providing for our daily needs is no less wondrous than rescuing us from our foes; in fact,

says the Midrash, "*geula b'chol yom*," we are redeemed every day.

The Seder night provides us with an opportunity to reexperience the extraordinary miracles of yetzias Mitzrayim, as Hashem revealed Himself in a demonstration of love for His chosen nation. This transformative experience, however, does not expire when the Seder concludes. We emerge with a penetrating vision of our lives and the world, in which the hand of Hashem is discerned in every context and circumstance, with Hashem "watching from the windows and peering from the lattices" (*Shir Hashirim* 2:9).

Endnotes

1. *Haggada Siach Ha'grid*, pp. 93ff.

2. For an additional source where Rav Soloveitchik elaborates on this theme, see *Harerei Kedem*, vol. 1, p. 304, s.v. *ba'zman ha'zeh*.

3. מפני שכשמוכיר גאולה מצרים ומתפלל מיד הוא "מראה שבוטח בה' בתפלה כיון שמבקש ממנו צרכיו שמי שאינו בוטח בו לא יבקש ממנו כלום וכן נראה באלה שמות רבה בפרשת בא אל פרעה שאומר לשם שכשראו ישראל הנסים והנפלאות שהיה עושה עמהם הבורא שלא כטבעו של עולם בטחו בו ועל זה נאמר וירא ישראל את היד הגדולה אשר עשה ה' במצרים וייראו העם את ה' ויאמינו בה' וגו' וכיון שמוכיר עכשיו אותה הגאולה שבטחו אבותינו בה' והצילם ומתפלל מיד נמצא שגם הוא בוטח בו שיענה אותו כמו שענה לישראל בעבור שבטחו בו ומפני זה מוכיר אותה הגאולה ומתפלל מיד והבטחון הוא עיקר היראה "והאמונה ולפיכך זוכה בסיתתו לחיי עולם הבא

4. This may shed light on the concept of the status of *hashkiveinu* as *geula arichta*, which explains why it is not a *hefsek* between the theme of geula and the commencement of the tefilla. *Hashkiveinu*, which expresses our *bitachon* in Hashem to protect us from ever-present dangers, represents the expansion of the appreciation of Hashem's *hashgachah* which follows from contemplating yetzias Mitzrayim.

Of course, much of this idea can be connected with the Ramban's understanding of yetzias Mitzrayim as the foundation for our emunah

in Hashem (see his commentary e.g. on Shemos 13:16, s.v. *Ve'atah Omar*, and Shemos 20:2-3). As well, it can shed light on the mitzvah of zechiras yetzias Mitzrayim, the obligation to mention yetzias Mitzrayim daily.

5. *Bereishis Rabbah* (20:9): הקיש גאולה לפרנסה, ופרנסה לגאולה, שנאמר (תהלים קלו) ויפרקנו מצרינו וסמיך ליה (שם) נותן לחם לכל בשוה, מה גאולה פלאים אף פרנסה פלאים, מה פרנסה בכל יום אף גאולה בכל יום. See similarly *Tannah D'bei Eliyahu* (Parsha 2) אמר דוד המלך אני אניד צדקותיו וחסדיו: (Parsha 2) של הקדוש ברוך הוא, שהוא עושה עם ישראל בכל שעה ושעה ובכל יום ויום, בכל יום אדם נמכר ובכל יום נפדה, בכל יום רוחו של אדם ניטלת הימנו וניתנת לבעל הפקדון, ולבקר מחזירין אותה עליו, שנאמר בידך אפקיד רוחי (תהלים ל"א ו'), בכל יום עושין לו ניסים כיוצאי מצרים, בכל יום עושין לו גאולה כיוצאי מצרים.

The Long Shorter Way: A Strategy for Geulah

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Over the years, my wife and I have had the zechus to lead Sedarim for diverse audiences in a variety of locations. For some of those years, we ran communal Sedarim here in Washington Heights under the auspices of the local Jewish Community Council for over 100 mostly elderly Jews who otherwise may not have had a Seder to go to. Often, they were constrained by the time that their aide was able to be by their side before bringing them home. In an effort to accelerate the pace of our Seder, I consulted with Rav Hershel Schachter regarding which parts I could skip. He recommended following the Rambam's Haggadah at the end of *Hilchos Chametz u'Matzah* and leaving out anything that does not appear in the Rambam's edition. At the Seder that year, when we arrived at Dayenu, I shared that since it doesn't

appear in the Rambam's Haggadah we would be skipping it to save time. Needless to say, this wasn't very popular among participants, many of whom had sung Dayenu at their Seder for more than four score and seven years, and they proceeded to sing it with gusto.

אמר רבי יהושע בן חנניה מימי לא נצחני אדם חוץ מ ... תינוק ... פעם אחת הייתי מהלך בדרך וראיתי תינוק יושב על פרשת דרכים ואמרתי לו באיזה דרך נלך לעיר אמר לי זו קצרה וארוכה וזו ארוכה וקצרה והלכתי בקצרה וארוכה כיון שהגעתי לעיר מצאתי שמקיפין אותה גנות ופרדיסין חזרתי לאחורי אמרתי לו בני הלא אמרת לי קצרה אמר לי ולא אמרתי לך ארוכה.

Said Rabbi Yehoshua ben Chananiah:

"Once a child got the better of me." ...

"I was traveling, and I met with a child at a crossroads. I asked him, 'which way to the city?' and he answered: 'This way is short and long, and this way is long and short.' I took the 'short and long' way. I soon reached the city but found my approach obstructed by gardens and orchards. So, I retraced my steps and said to the child: 'My son, did you not tell me that this is the short way?' Answered the child: 'Did I not tell you that it is also long?'"

Talmud, Eruvin 53b

We all love shortcuts. Project creep, slipping deadlines, and a to-do list that seems to get longer each day — these experiences are all too common in both life and work. An ever-growing array of “life hacks” aim to help us save time and money and/or achieve our goals and dreams faster. New acronyms and movements have arisen in our lexicon such as FIRE: Financial Independence, Retire Early. And, especially on the heels of a pandemic, whether in our professional or personal lives, many of us feel even more pressure to optimize our time,

productivity, and relationships.

The Seder presents us with an alternative. Making haste certainly has its time and place, as the matzah clearly reminds us. Yet, despite the presence of this core symbol, a different message seems to take center stage on Seder night. Before we even start the Haggadah, many families and communities frequently sing together the steps of the Seder: Kadesh, Urchatz, etc. Matzah will have its turn at our Seder, but it's part of a broader narrative. As we each become the evening's MC announcing the “order” of proceedings and outlining the exact steps that are ahead of us, the implication is clear: No shortcuts. No omissions.

Almost as soon as we begin the Haggadah, we go even further. On this night at least, not only are we not going to be taking any shortcuts, but (to use the Rambam's version), “*v'chol hama'arich beyetzias Mitzrayim harei zeh meshubach*” — we are encouraged to tell the story at great length. This is reinforced by another dominant symbol of Seder night, the *arba kosos*, the four cups of wine, representative of four expressions or stages of unfolding redemption. Emerging from our narrow places and ideologies is a multi-step process that takes time.

In fact, it is Hashem, *bichvodo u'veatzmo*, who teaches us this lesson in the opening verse of Parshas B'shalach: *v'lo nacham elokim, derech eretz p'lishtim ki karov hu ...* Hashem did not lead us via the land of the Plishtim because it was (too) near. The quicker path may have had disastrous consequences.

In the drive for profits, companies unsurprisingly have a proclivity to the short longer way. For example, many want to hire “multitaskers” capable of