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Sha'alei Pesach

April 2019 • Nissan 5779



ישיבת שעלבים (ע"ר)
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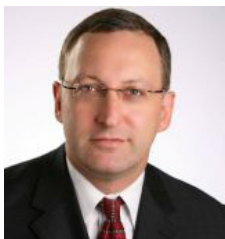
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About Shaalvim Educational Institutions





A Message from Our Leadership...

Welcome to the Pesach installment of *Sha'alei Torah*. We hope to continue to provide interesting and enlightening Divrei Torah from the Sha'alvim community to your inbox.

As we look forward to the chag of Pesach, we have included, among many others, thoughts from our Rosh Yeshiva, Rav Michael Yammer, *shlit"u*, guiding us how to reach a state of Shleimut. We are proud to include articles from members of the greater Sha'alvim family, with contributions from rabbinic alumni, a Sha'alvim father (soon to be a Sha'alvim grandfather) and a member of our Kollel.

We are pleased to be able to send you these Divrei Torah from our alumni, but we are most proud of the high level of learning that goes on every day at Yeshivat Sha'alvim and Sha'alvim for Women. Our Talmidim and Talmidot benefit every day from the guidance of Rav Yammer, Rav Ari Waxman and Rav Yamin Goldsmith and their dedicated teams of

Ramim and Morot.

This "Choref Zman" in yeshiva and SFW was marked by intense, vibrant Torah study, with growth in Yirat Shamayim and Middot. The excellent reputation of Yeshivat Sha'alvim and SFW is profound; we look forward to greeting many new and returning talmidim and talmidot in Elul.

Please enjoy these Divrei Torah as you celebrate Pesach with your families. If you have helped us over the past year, thank you so much for your support. If you are interested in helping, please reach out to us. That support helps us continue to provide a nurturing environment for our Talmidim and Talmidot to learn and grow.

Best wishes for a Chag Kasher V'sameach,

Moshe Orenbuch
President

Jacob Weichholz
Chairman

YESHIVAT SHA'ALVIM

5779

67 Shana Aleph Students
51 Shana Bet and
4 Shana Gimel

5780

**70 Incoming Students From
Around the World**
Plus 50 Shana Bet and
Gimmel Students

TZAHAL

**4 Students Being
Inducted Into
the IDF This Year!**

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

**Over 100 students
completed Masechet Gittin**
Chief Rabbi Rav David Lau
spoke at the siyum.
*The Bekiut Program in yeshiva
is led by Ramim Rav David Lebor
and Rav Netanel Luria.*

SHA'ALVIM FOR WOMEN

5779

19 Shana Bet Students
Our largest Shana Bet
class in our history!

5780

**Over 70 Incoming Students
From Around the World**
Celebrating our 15th Year!

ALUMNI

**Alexis Levy and
Shoshana Grad**
Members of the SFW
Faculty

NEW PROGRAMS

Monday Night Masmidos
Optional Learning Program
on Monday evenings





Shleimut; Intellect & Emotion

Rav Michael Yammer, Rosh HaYeshiva

“And Moshe said, so says Hashem at the middle of the night I will go throughout Egypt and every first born will die...and afterwards all of these servants of yours will come...and say (to Moshe) leave, you and all of the nation...”
(Sefer Shmot 11:14-18).

If the plague of the firstborn, *Makkat Bechorot*, was what tipped the scale and led to the Exodus from Egypt, what was the necessity of the previous nine *makkot*? Every moment that the we remained in Egypt we were susceptible to the contamination of the 49 levels of impurity! Why didn't Hashem initially smite the Egyptians with *Makkat Bechorot*, which would have generated the immediate Exodus from Egypt?

A person who knowingly consumes *chametz* on Pesach receives the severe punishment of *karet*. There is no other historical occurrence which fosters *karet*. Many mitzvot are connected to remembering the Exodus, *Zecher Yetziat Mitzrayim*. Examples include tefillin, mezuzah and kiddush on Shabbat. This insures that we do not forget, even momentarily, *Yetziat Mitzrayim*. What constitutes the importance of *Yetziat Mitzrayim*?

I would like to advance three approaches. Each one bears relevance to our efforts in yeshiva.

A. The Ramban (Sefer Shmot 13:16) writes that the history of mankind contains a weakening of proper faith [*emunah*] in Hashem. Some totally deny His Existence; others deny His Knowledge. Another group maintains that what transpires in this world

is removed from His Control, thus negating reward and punishment. To correct these thoughts, Hashem performs supernatural signs that demonstrate His power and rule of all.

Clarity of faith is essential. We all must recognize that Hashem is the Creator, knows all and does as He deems fit. Clarity of *emunah* is a prerequisite to accepting the Torah.

The role of the *makkot* in Egypt was not restricted to enabling the Exodus; they also strengthened and clarified *emunah* in Hashem. Hashem does not perform supernatural miracles in every generation. The prohibition and severe punishment of consuming *chametz* and the performance of numerous mitzvot connected to *Yetziat Mitzrayim* enable us to remember the miracles of the *makkot* and to strengthen our *emunah*.

The Rambam writes in *Moreh Nevuchim* that the Torah was given in public for this reason. The entire nation directly witnessed Hashem speaking. Although this public demonstration ultimately led to the breaking of the tablets, *Shvirat HaLuchot*, it was necessary in order to enable clarity of *emunah*.

In yeshiva we maintain that the study of Torah fosters expansion of the soul, spiritual growth, and enables a person to identify his/her unique role in regards to connecting with Hashem, Torah, mitzvot and the Jewish People. This is contingent upon clarity of *emunah*. Questions that occupy a student and are not resolved prevent expansion of the soul. Such matters must be engaged and confronted, including conferring with Rabbanim. Torah influences a

Rav Michael Yammer is a Sha'alvim Hesder alumnus who was appointed Ra"m in 1988. For decades overseas students have benefitted from the methodological tools they acquired in Rav Yammer's shiur. The rav's keen understanding of people has motivated his students to seek out his advice, even long after their stay at Sha'alvim. Author of the Pathways in Halachah volume, Rav Yammer serves as Rosh HaYeshiva.



person who has reached a state of identification with the Torah, clarity of *emunah*. Unresolved intellectual difficulties prevent spiritual development.

B. Rav Soloveitchik (*MePenenei HaRav*) distinguishes between several types of division mentioned in the havdalah prayer. The difference between light and darkness is apparent; even members of the animal kingdom recognize this difference. This is **not** the case in regards to the difference between sacred [*kodesh*] and mundane [*chol*], between the Jewish People and gentiles. Is this distinction merely subjective, or objective (similar to light and darkness)?

The *makkot* in Egypt demonstrated that the difference between Jews and gentiles is inherent. The former were not afflicted by the plagues which struck the latter. Why is understanding this difference so crucial? Why did this lesson mandate our presence in Egypt for an extended stretch of time?

A person who is not aware of his/her true status is not able to properly serve Hashem. Recognition that we are the children of Hashem is the first condition to serve Him. This knowledge is vital in order to avoid foreign influences. Rav Soloveitchik teaches that precisely for this reason, recognition of our unique status as children of Hashem, we remained in Egypt for the duration of the entire ten plagues.

C. Sefer HaChinuch addresses the numerous

mitzvot associated with *Zecher Yetziat Mitzrayim*. A person is influenced, essentially formed, by his actions. The prohibition of breaking the bones of the Korban Pesach instills within us the recognition that we are members of royalty and conduct ourselves accordingly. One mitzvah is not sufficient to absorb this message. Therefore we are also required to recline, to drink four cups of wine and to consume matzot. Actions influence emotions. The hearts follow the actions. It is not sufficient to achieve intellectual

awareness of our unique status; we must feel it! Therefore numerous mitzvot are necessary to achieve this goal.

In order to reach *shleimut*, there must be intellectual clarity. Difficulties must be confronted and resolved. The intellect, however, is external. To internalize the knowledge of our unique status actions are required; the performance of a mitzva, another and another. This will yield an individual who is a child of Hashem, a member of the royal family. He/she will influence

others and not be influenced.

May we merit to discuss the miracles, to experience them, to reach the status of Bnei Yisrael. May we attain intellectual clarification and perform many mitzvot to positively influence ourselves. May we attain the exalted state of “*Na’aseh VeNishmah*,” profound recognition of our role and purpose; the children and Nation of Hashem.

“
The hearts follow
the actions. It is
not sufficient to
achieve intellectual
awareness of our
unique status; we
must feel it!
”

The Rosh Yeshiva's article has been dedicated by Miriam and Allen Pfeiffer





Tenai in Kerias Shema and Sefiras HaOmer

Rav Yosef Gavriel Bechhofer

The *Machzor Vitri*, Pesach #104 and *Avudraham*, Tefillos Pesach, both cite Rashi's practice to count Sefiras HaOmer either *me'bod yom* (before sunset) or *bein hashemashos* (during twilight) with the tzibbur without a bracha, and to count again at night with a bracha.

The question is that this seems to be contingent of the efficacy of a *tenai* (a conditional transaction) in matters of personal mitzvot (the *tenai* is that the earlier sefira should not count as his actual fulfillment of the mitzvah unless he forgets to count later). As a *tenai* is not effective in a case of a *milsa d'leisa b'shelichus* (a matter that cannot be transacted via agency),¹ a *tenai* should not be effective in Sefiras HaOmer, which cannot be performed via a *shaliach*.² Moreover, why is this not an issue of *breirah* (invalid retroactive clarification of the validity of a transaction)?

The Gra (*Orach Chaim* 489:3) explains that the *tenai* works as follows: His count during *bein*

hashemashos was sufficient *b'di'eved* (such as if he forgets to count again later) because *safek d'Rabbanan l'kula* – Sefiras HaOmer according to most opinions it today only a Rabbinic obligation), yet he counted later again because he held that making a bracha is sufficiently significant to warrant counting again. The *Moadim U'Zemanim* (7:230) explains that one can make a bracha on a *mitzvah kiyumis* (optional mitzvah) even if he has already fulfilled the *mitzvah chiyumis* (obligatory mitzvah). It is, however, somewhat difficult to accept such an explanation, as it seems strange to assert that a mitzvah can be both sometimes *chiyumis* and sometimes *kiyumis*.

Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (*Halichos Shlomo* 16:16:90) rules that a *tenai* may also be made from a time shortly after *Tzeis HaKochavim*, to a time later after *Tzeis HaKochavim*.

A similar *tenai* is suggested by R' Akiva Eiger (*Orach Chaim*, end of #46): If one is afraid that the

¹ The *sugya* of *tenai* and *shelichus* is in Kesuvos (74a):

אמר ליה בר בי רב שפיר קא אמרת מכדי כל תנאי מהיכא גמרינן מתנאי בני גד ובני ראובן תנאה דאפשר לקיימיה ע"י שליח כי התם לא הוי תנאה.

תוספות מסכת כתובות דף עד עמוד א: וא"ת ומה סברא יש כאן דלא גמרינן מהתם אלא לענין מה שהוא סברא דהא לא ילפינן מהתם דלא מהני תנאי אלא בנתינת קרקע ו"ל דהיינו טעמא דהואיל והמעשה כל כך בידו שיכול לקיימו ע"י שליח סברא הוא שיהא כמו כן בידו לשוויי ביה תנאה אבל חליצה שאין בידו לקיימה ע"י שליח לא הוי בידו נמי למירמי ביה תנאה ואפילו לא יתקיים התנאי יהיה המעשה קיים ומשום כך סברא מודו כ"ע דבעינן שאפשר לקיימו ע"י שליח דומיא דבני גד ובני ראובן.

בית הבחירה למאירי מסכת כתובות דף עד עמוד א: שכל תנאי אחד מתנאיו הוא שיהא אפשר לקיימו על ידי שליח ר"ל שיהא המעשה שהתנאי בא בשבילו איפשר לקיימו על ידי שליח כגון תנאי בני גד ובני ראובן שאיפשר שיחזיקו באותם הארצות על ידי שליח שכל כיוצא בזה המעשה חלוש והתנאי מבטלו אבל החליצה אי אפשר לעשותה על ידי שליח ואין תנאי מבטלו. חידושי הריטב"א מסכת כתובות דף עד עמוד א: גמרינן מינה דסברא הוא דכיון דמעשה אלים כולי האי דליתיה על ידי שליח דלא חייל ביה תנאי.

² The *Oneg Yom Tov* (#3) states that a *tenai* is ineffective in a matter of a mitzvah because a *tenai* works by making the *ratzon* (will) of the person transacting the transaction conditional. He posits that the *kavanah* required to fulfill mitzvot is not the same as the *ratzon* requisite for other transactions. Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (*Minchas Shlomo* 1:80) disagrees.

Rav Yosef Gavriel Bechhofer learned in Sha'alvim during the years 1978-1981.

When learning in the Mir in 1983-1984 he would come to Sha'alvim on Fridays to learn with Rav Aryeh Michael Katzav. His major Rabbeim in the yeshiva were Rav Shimon Zelaznik, Rav Yitzchok Dzimitrovskiy and Rav Meir Schlesinger. His published seforim are the *Bigdei Shesh* on Bava Basra and *Sefer Shoftim*, and *The Contemporary Eruv: Eruvin in Modern Metropolitan Areas*.



tzibbur will only get to Shema after the zman, he can say the first *pasuk* and *Boruch Shem* with a *tenai* that if he will not reach the main Shema on time, this will be his fulfillment of the mitzvah.

To clarify this issue, we must understand how a *tenai* works. According to the *Birchas Shmuel* in the name of Rav Chaim Soloveitchik, a *tenai* is extrinsic to the transaction – the transaction is complete in and of itself, but a *tenai* can “break” the transaction.³ The Maitcheter Illui⁴ does not accept this understanding. He maintains that the *tenai* becomes intrinsic to the transaction, in one of the following ways:

a) If X (*tenai*) is fulfilled, then Y (the original *ma'aseh*) will be sustained; if not-X (*tenai* is not fulfilled, then Z (an alternative outcome). This *tenai* requires the use of *tenai kaful* and other *Mishpatei Ha'Tenai'im* (the special parameters necessary for a *tenai* to be effective, derived from Moshe Rabbeinu's conditional grant of the land of Transjordan to the two and a half tribes).

b) If X, then Y; if not-X, then not-Y. This *tenai* is one of *mei'achshav* (literally, it takes effect immediately) or *al menas*: Since there is no alternative outcome (only the possibility of the transaction's nullification), these forms of *tenai* do not require the use of *tenai kaful* and other *Mishpatei Ha'Tenai'im*.

Why are these not cases of *bereirah*? The Maitcheter explains that *bereirah* works differently,

as follows: If X, then Y (the original *ma'aseh* has one definition); if A, then B (the original *ma'aseh* has a different definition). An example is the case of a husband stipulating that the wife for whom a *get* was written will be determined by who comes out of the door first.

The cases of Sefirah and Shema are of the nature of: If X (the later *kiyum* takes place effectively), then not-Y (the original *kiyum* is nullified); if not-X (the later *kiyum* does not take place effectively), then Y (the original *kiyum* is sustained). As such, it is not *bereirah*. Now, normally, such a *tenai* requires *tenai kaful* and other *Mishpatei Ha'Tenai'im*. However, as the *Tzitz Eliezer* (7:4) and others point out, that is only in a *tenai bein adam l'chaveiro* where proper verbalization is necessary to establish the parameters of a transaction with clarity that provided for mutual identical understandings. Such is not required *bein adam l'atzmo* when a person is performing a *ma'aseh* with a *tenai* that has ramifications only for himself.⁵

There is another issue we must address. Many poskim maintain one cannot fulfill the mitzvah of Sefiras HaOmer through the mechanism of *shomei'a k'oneh* (“one who hears something, it is as if he said it). This seems strange: Why is this different than other mitzvos of *dibbur* (verbalization) such *kiddush* or *shofar*? Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (*Shalmei Moed* chap. 84) suggests that *shomei'a k'oneh* can be effective for a *dibbur* (speech) or *keriah* (reading), but not for *sefirah*. Counting is a personal activity. Thus,

³ I first heard this idea many years ago, while learning at Sha'alvim, from *Mori v'Rabi*, Rav Shimon Zelaznik zt”l. As he put it התנאי הוא שובר את המעשה. See *Birchas Shmuel*, *Kiddushin* #23, *Bava Metzia* #37 and *Bava Basra* #52.

⁴ *Chiddushei Ha'illui Me'Meitchet* #39.

⁵ One may also see *tenaim* such as Rashi's *tenai* for Sefiras HaOmer as *bein adam la'Makom*. The principle is similar: Hashem does not need additional clarification.

Rav Bechhofer's article has been dedicated by Elliot & Nomi Press



while the mitzvah of Sefirah is theoretically subject to *shomei'a k'oneh*, the maintenance of the count is not. The *Harerei Kedem* (2:112) explains Rashi's minhag concerning Sefiras HaOmer in a similar vein: The earlier sefirah may not be a fulfillment of the mitzvah of *U'Sefartem Lachem*. It does suffice, however, to maintain the count of *Temimos* (a perfect enumeration).

The Rogatchover⁶ posits a similar dichotomy in regards to Shema: It consists of *Kabbolas Ol Malchus Shomayim* (accepting the yoke of Heaven), which is personal and that cannot be accomplished via *shomei'a k'oneh*, and a *din keriah* (a requirement that such a statement be read aloud). This can be accomplished via *shomei'a k'oneh*.⁷

We may now posit as follows: In both these cases – whether that of the mitzvah of *Kabbolas Ol Malchus Shomayim* or that of the count to retain *Temimos* – the earlier *ma'aseh* is not subject to *shomei'a k'oneh*, which is a type of *shelichus*. But in both cases, the latter *ma'aseh mitzvah* is subject to *shomei'a k'oneh* – i.e., to *shelichus*. As the requirement of *isa b'shelichus*

(subject to transaction via agency) is in order to indicate control over the *ma'aseh* or its *ratzon*, the fact that *shelichus* can be made relevant via *shomei'a k'oneh* suffices to indicate such control and the *tenai* can be effective.

Nevertheless, this is only possible because the mitzvos of Sefiras HaOmer and Shema are complex, multifaceted mitzvos, to the point that the earlier *ma'aseh* was not a complete *ma'aseh mitzvah*, and therefore is not even a bona fide *b'di'eved* of the actual, entire mitzvah, but only a limited accomplishment of certain components of the mitzvah. Were the earlier *ma'aseh* to be considered a complete *ma'aseh mitzvah*, then the *kavanah* (if we hold mitzvos *tzerichos kavanah*) was present and the *ma'aseh* performed properly. Under such circumstance, if anything, the later *kiyum* might be construed as *Bal Tosif* (adding on to a mitzvah in an inappropriate and forbidden manner)!

⁶ Tzofnas Panei'ach, Hafl'oh 54c; cited in Klalei HaTorah V'Ha'Mitzvah, Kuf, #139.

⁷ The Rogatchover (Tzofnas Panei'ach, Hashmotos L'Hilchos Erchin 57a; cited Klalei HaTorah V'Ha'Mitzvah, Ayin #118) maintains that the reason every individual reads the ten sons of Haman to himself is because a *din keriyah* can be fulfilled via *shomei'a k'oneh*, but the requirement of *neshimah achas*, that all the names be read in one breath, cannot be fulfilled via *shomei'a k'oneh*.

הגלות בתוך הגלות – והגאולה בתוך הגאולה

עומק הענין של גלות וגאולה כלל ישראל בתוך מצרים

הרב אשר ברנדר



רש"י, בריש פרשת ויחי [מז:כח] מביא דברי המדרש: "למה פרשה זו סתומה? לפי שכיון שנפטר יעקב אבינו נסתמו עיניהם ולבם של ישראל מצרת השעבוד – שהתחילו לשעבדם." [ומביא שם עוד פירוש]

1. וכבר הקשו על דברי רש"י אלו מפירושו לקמן [שמות ו:טז] על הפסוק "ושני חיי לוי שבע ושלשים ומאת שנה": ואלו דבריו הקדושים: "למה נמנו שנותיו של לוי? להודיע כמה ימי השעבוד שכל זמן שא' מן השבטים קיים לא היה שעבוד... ולוי האריך ימים על כולם"

ולכאורה דברי רש"י סתרי אהדדי. היינו, אם נעשה חשבון פשוט, נראה בעליל שמיתת יעקב קדמה למיתת לוי בערך שבעים ושבע שנה. שהרי יעקב מת בגיל קמ"ז, שבע עשרה שנה לאחר ירידתו למצרים ואלו לוי מת בגל קל"ז, תשעים וארבע שנה לאחר ירידתו ממצרים. (אנו יוצאים מתוך הנחת בעל שפתי חכמים שלוי היה ארבע שנים יותר מבוגר מיוסף. יוסף, בשנה השנייה של הרעב היה בן ל"ט שנה, וא"כ לוי כשירד למצרים היה בן מ"ג שנה – ואף אם הדברים אינם כה מדויקים, אין כאן הפרש יותר משנה ושנתיים דהא כל שבטי קה חוץ מבנימין נולדו בתוך שש שנים). וא"כ צ"ע בכוונת רש"י כשנקט בריש פרשת ויחי שלאחר מיתת יעקב [המצריים] התחילו לשעבדם.

2. ועוד יש לדייק בדברי רש"י – שבמותקל ראשון כפל דבריו כשנקט "נסתמו עיניהם ולבם.. מצרת השעבוד שהתחילו לשעבדם. והלא היה מספיק לכתוב "שהתחילו לשעבדם" – ואיזה תוספת ביאור יש בקטע של "מצרת השעבוד"

3. ועוד יש לשאול מה הוא עומק הענין של סתימת עיניהם ולבם – דייקא?

וכבר דשו ביה רבים בדברי חז"ל אלו, הבה נציע ב' גישות בהבנת דברי רש"י, ולבסוף נרחיב הדברים.

1. בספרו מעין בית השואבה, ר' שמעון שוואב הסביר פשר הדבר שדברי רש"י אלו באופן כללי מתייחסים לשני שלבים בשעבוד כלל

ישראל. השלב הראשון קרה באופן נעלם. מחמת רוב עושרם ומנוחתם, נסתמו עיני כלל ישראל מלראות, ולבם מלהבין ולהרגיש התחלת השעבוד. [וענין של עיניהם ולבם הוא הענין של בינה והרגשה]. כיצד וממתי התחיל השלב הזה? נעיין במקרא ונגלה:

אצל פטירת יעקב אבינו, אחרי תום ימי חנוטו וימי אבלו, (שבעים יום) יוסף הציג, בלשון פיוס, בקשה לפני בית פרעה על קבורת אביו בארץ ישראל [בראשית נג:ד] "אם נא מצאתי חן בעיניכם דברו נא באזני פרעה לאמר אבי השביעני..." והלא דבר הוא? יוסף שהיה משנה למלך – למה לו ללכת לפני בית פרעה כדי לדבר לפרעה – היה לו ללכת מישרין?

חז"ל [ב"ר ק:ד] עמדו על הקושי, ותירצו "שאין אבל נכנס בפלטין של מלך". ולכאורה הטעם מפני שיוסף כאבל אינו נראה די הגון להראות לפני המלך – וכן איתא בהעמק דבר ובספורנו ["כי אין לבא אל שער המלך בלבוש שק" – וע"ע במשך חכמה שם]. אמנם, טוען הרב שוואב, הדוחק בדבריהם מבואר, שהלא קודם היותו נראה כאבל, תיכף לאחר מיתת אביו היה לו להודיע לפרעה צוואת אביו. לכן מסיק רב שוואב, על כרחנו נראה שיוסף ירד מגדולתו [וכנראה שהמצרים הורידוהו מגדולתו] לאחר פטירת אביו להיות נחשב כאיש מכובד ועשיר – זוהי המשמעות של התחלת השעבוד. [וזוהי ג"כ כוונת חז"ל באמרם שאין אבל נכנס בפלטין של מלך – היינו מכיון שלא היה השליט היה צריך לנהג את עצמו בנמוסים רגילים] מאחר שהוסר יוסף מהיות שליט על מצרים, היה מקום איפא להתחיל תהליך השעבוד. ע"פ זה הוא מבאר, למה יעקב הכריח את יוסף לישבע לו על קבורתו בארץ ישראל. יעקב ראה שלאחר מותו תיבטל שררת יוסף, ויהיה ליוסף צורך לבא בעלילה ובהגיון של "אבי השביעני לאמר" [בראשית נה:] וכל זה ראה יעקב בעומק שכלו.

2. והרב גדליה שארר זצ"ל, בספרו אור גדליהו, הסביר בכיוון שונה שבמיתת יעקב נסתמה ההיבט וההרגש הפנימי של איש ישראל. העינים והלב בלשון חז"ל הם תרי "סרסורי דעבירה" [ברכות יב.] מצד

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אחד, ומצד שני הם הם המובילים לדבר מצוה וכמו שמצאנו בירושלמי [ברכות א:ה] "א"ר לוי ליבא ועינא תרי סרסורין דחטאה דכתיב תנה בני לבך לי ועיניך דרכי תצרנה – אמר הקב"ה אי יהבת לי לבך ועיניך אנא ידע דאת לי" [וזוהי ג"כ מסר ומגמת התפילין לתלות עינינו ולשעבד לבנו לקודשא בריך הוא]. אותו ביטוי גם מופיע כתיאור של השגחת ה' בבית המקדש: [מלכים א:ט, ג] "הקדשתי את הבית הזה אשר בנתה לשום שמי עד עולם והיו עיני ולבי שם כל הימים." היינו שהשגחת ה' שורה על כלל ישראל באותה מדה שאנו פונים אליו.

הסרת ההשגחה הזאת היא התחלת השעבוד שעליו דבר רש"י. קדושת יעקב אבינו היתה בבחינת קדושת המקדש. (וכמו שמצאנו בדברי הרמב"ן [ריש פרשת שמות] ש"האבות הן הן המרכבה") השראת השכינה אצלם היתה באותה הבחינה שהיתה אצל כלל ישראל. ולכן מצאנו שהנסים של הענן קשור על האהל, הנר הדלוק, ובברכה המצויה בעיסה מצאה הקבלה בבית המקדש בתופעות של השראת השכינה, לחם הפנים והמנורה. עד כאן דבריו המלהיבים של ר' שארע. נמצא לפי דבריו שכוונת חז"ל היתה לגלות לנו שהיו שני שלבים בגלות. הגלות הפיזית התחילה במיתת לוי ואלו הגלות הרוחנית התחילה כבר במיתת יעקב – שמהסתלקותו הוסרה השגחת ה'.

ונראה שעדיין צריכים להבהיר ולהסביר:

1. איך בדיוק השפיעה מיתת יעקב על מצב הרוחני של כלל ישראל?
2. אם היו שני שלבים בגלות, אזי צריכים שני שלבים בגאולה. מצאנו יציאת מצרים הפיזית – אבל איפה מצאנו יציאת המצרים הרוחנית?

1. בזוהר [וארא כה:] מצאנו דבר נפלא:

ת"ח כתיב הן בני ישראל לא שמעו אלי ואיך ישמעני פרעה ואני ערל שפתים, מאי ואני ערל שפתים והא בקדמיתא כתיב לא איש דברים אנכי וגו' כי כבד פה וכבד לשון אנכי, וקודשא בריך הוא הוה אותיב ליה מי שם פה לאדם וגו', והוא אמר ואנכי אהיה עם פוך, ס"ד דלא הוה כן! והשתא אמר ואני ערל שפתים! אי הכי אן הוא מלה דאבטח ליה קודשא בריך הוא בקדמיתא? אלא רזא איהו, משה קלא, ודבור – דאיהו מלה דיליה הוה בגלותא, והוה איהו אטים לפרשא מלין ובגין דא אמר ואיך ישמעני פרעה בעוד דמלה דילי איהי בגלותא דיליה... הא אנא קלא מלה גרע דאיהי בגלותא ועל דא שתף קודשא בריך הוא לאהרן בהדיה, ת"ח כל זמנא דדבור הוה בגלותא

קלא אסתלק מניה ומלה הוה אטים בלא קול כד אתא משה אתא קול, ומשה הוה קול בלא מלה בגין דהוה בגלותא וכל זמנא דדבור הוה בגלותא משה אזיל קלא בלא דבור והכי אזיל עד דקריבו לטורא דסיני ואתיהיבת אורייתא ובהוהא זמנא אתחבר קלא בדבור וכדין מלה מליל הדא הוא דכתיב ה"ד (שמות כ) וידבר אלהים את כל הדברים האלה, וכדין משה אשתכח שלים במלה כדקא יאות קול ודבור כחדא בשלימו.

הזהר מקשה: למה משה מתלונן על ערלת שפתיו כשהקב"ה הבטיח לו קודם לכן "ואנכי אהיה עם פוך" – ומתרגן הזהר שיש לחלק בין קול, שניתן למשה מאז, לדבור שהיה עדיין חסר למשה עד מתן תורה. מה שיוצא מדברי הזהר הוא שיש ג' שלבים ביצירת הדבור לכלל ישראל

1. בראשית הדברים ה"קול" וה"דבור" היו בגלות.
2. כי אתא משה אתא קול – משה הביא הקול בלי הדבור [היינו בתוך ימי שעבודם במצרים].
3. אצל מתן תורה, בני ישראל קבלו דבור עם הקול

ובודאי כוונת הזהר היא חתומה ועמוקה. וכבר הסביר הגרי"ד סולוביצ'יק זצ"ל דבר נפלא בפירוש הפסוקים להסביר המושג של "כי אתא משה אתא קול". בדיוק לפני מראה הסנה, התורה מתארת את המצב של כלל ישראל במצרים [שמות ב:כג-כה]:

ויהי בימים הרבים ההם וימת מלך מצרים ויאנחו בני ישראל מן העבודה ויזעקו ותעל שועתם אל האלוקים מן העבודה: וישמע אלוקים את נאקתם ויזכר אלוקים את בריתו את אברהם את יצחק ואת יעקב: וירא אלוקים את בני ישראל וידע אלוקים:

2. קודם שנקשה, נעיין: חשבון פשוט מגלה שכלל ישראל כבר היו במצרים לכל הפחות מאה ושבעים שנה (ויותר מסתבר שהיו שם אפילו יותר – והדבר תלוי אם ה"זעקתם" קרה לפני שהיה משה במדין או לאחר מכאן). א"כ יש לשאול, מה גרם לזעקת בני ישראל עתה – לאחר כל השנים שהיו במצרים. למה דוקא אז מצאו את קולם והתחילו לזעוק שכתוצאה ממנו הקב"ה שמע את קולם? במילים אחרות. מה היה הגורם העיקרי לפתיחת פה של כלל ישראל?

ואם נעיין בדבר נגלה שהתורה, בדיוק לפני זעקת בני ישראל פותחת לנו חלון להבין האישיות והגדלות של משה רבינו [שמות ב:יא-כא] ויהי בימים ההם ויגדל משה אל אחיו וירא בסבלתם וירא איש מצרי מכה איש עברי מאחיו: ויפן כה וכה וירא כי אין איש ויך את המצרי ויטמנהו בחול: ויצא ביום השני



והנה שני אנשים עברים נצים ויאמר לרשע למה תכה רעך: ויאמר מי שמך לאיש שר ושפט עלינו הלהרגני אתה אמר כאשר הרגת את המצרי ויירא משה ויאמר אכן יודע הדבר: וישמע פרעה את הדבר הזה ויבקש להרג את משה ויברח משה מפני פרעה וישב בארץ מדין וישב על הבאר: ולכהן מדין שבע בנות ותבאנה ותדלנה ותמלאנה את הרהטים להשקות צאן אביהן: ויבא הרעים ויגרשם ויקם משה ויושען וישק את צאנם: ותבאנה אל רעואל אביהן ויאמר מדוע מהרתן בא היום: ותאמרן איש מצרי הצילנו מיד הרעים וגם דלה דלה לנו וישק את הצאן: ויאמר את בנתיו ואיו למה זה עזבתן את האיש קראן לו ויאכל לחם: ותלד בן ויקרא את שמו גרשם כי אמר גר הייתי בארץ נכריה:

3. יוצא, שפגישתנו הראשונה עם משה רבינו היא אינו כענק רוחני במישור של בין אדם למקום, אינו כאדם המתפלל - אלא כאיש השונה עוול, כאיש שעומד נגד המאיימים והרודים למיניהם. ובשלושה הספורים אנו מוצאים שמשה יצא נגד מצרי המכה איש עברי, נגד עברי המכה עברי ולבסוף אף נגד המדינים המאיימים על בנות יתרו. למה כה חשוב הנקודה הזאת?

כמה נפלאים הם דברי האבן עזרא כאן [ב:ה] כשהוא מתמודד עם השאלה של השגחת השם שסבב למה משה גדל דוקא בבית פרעה ומחשבות השם עמקו ומי יוכל לעמד בסודו ולו לבדו נתכנו עלילות אולי סבב השם זה שיגדל משה בבית המלכות להיות נפשו על מדרגה העליונה... ולא תהיה שפילה ורגילה להיות בבית עבדים. הלא תראה שהרג מצרי בעבור שהוא עושה חמס והושיע בנות מדין מרועים בעבור שהיו עושים חמס להשקות צאן מהמים שדלו.

אשר על כן הסביר הגרי"ד סולובצ'יק שזו באמת כוונת הזהר "כי אתא משה אתא קול". לפני ביאת משה, כלל ישראל היו בבחינת כחרש לא אפתח פיו. נפשותם השפלות לא הרגישו נעלבים מרודים וסגופים. הם סבלו וראו בסבלות אחרים - ולא מללו. כמו עבד שאין שום זיהוי עצמאית, כך בני ישראל. לאחר כל כך הרבה שנים, הם אבדו את קולם. הם שכחו מאיזה מעיין נבעו מימיו הרוחניים.

כשכלל ישראל ראו משה ונפשו הגבוהה שלא סבל צרת אחיו, הם הזכירו לעצמם מאין הוא בא, ומאין הם באים - ושניהם ממקור אחד. בני אברהם יצחק ויעקב. אזי הבינו באופן עמוק לאיזה מדרגה הם ירדו, דוקא אז זעקו על גורלם מה.

אמנם עדיין לא הבינו באופן מדויק איך לתאר המצב האידיאל שאליו הם חשקו. והיינו הבחינה של קול בלי דיבור. [ומובן היטב ההקבלה הלשונית בפסוקים אצל סיפורי משה "ויהי בימים ההם ויגדל משה ויצא אל אחיו וירא בסבלתם" עם "ויהי בימים הרבים ההם וימת מלך מצרים... ויזעקו"]

ובסוף התהליך, במתן תורה כשבנ"י באו להר סיני, הם קבלו המלה, והיינו היכולת לתאר ולהבין לאיזו דרגה מעולה עם קבלת מצוות ות"ת יכל בן ישראל להגיע. המלה, היא תאור חיובי, מסוים ומפורט. עד מתן תורה, כלל ישראל הבינו שגורלם המר אינם המציאות הנורמלי של בני אברהם יצחק ויעקב אבל עדיין לא הבינו, איך להגיע לקדושה.

4. א"כ משה לא רק הוציא את בני ישראל ממצרים באופן פיזי אלא גם התחיל את התהליך הרוחני של יציאת מצרים. והלא כה מדויק דברי רש"י על התחלת התהליך של משה: "ויהי בימים ההם ויגדל משה ויצא אל אחיו וירא בסבלתם". ודברי רש"י הם מתוק לחכי וערבים עלי - שהלא נקט "נתן ענינו ולבן להיות מיצר עליהם". א"כ רואים שהתחלת "צרת השעבוד" היתה על ידי סתימת עיניהם ולבם של ישראל שנגרם ע"י מיתת יעקב. משה רבינו "יצא אל אחיו" "נתן ענינו ולבו" לראות את הצרות וכתוצאה מכך החזיר את הקול לתוך כלל ישראל. אותם שפתים של כלל ישראל שעד הנה היו אטומים ובלי רוח ממלא עכשו התחילו לדובב, לדבר ולחשב על זהותם כבני אברהם יצחק ויעקב על תפקידם בעולם הזה. לכשתמצוי לומר נתינת העינים של משה רבינו פתח את הפה הרוחני של כלל ישראל.

וביתר ביאור נראה להוסיף נופך אחרון. ידוע ומפורסם דברי אונקלוס על "ויפח באפיו נשמת חיים", שתרגם נשמת חיים ל"רוח ממללא" שבזה נבדל ונתיחד האדם מבהמה. ע"פ הזהר הנ"ל, שכלל ישראל התחיל "לדבר", יחד עם פירוש אונקלוס, נראה לומר שכמו שיצירת אדם הראשון היתה עם קבלת כח הדבור, כך התהליך הזו של יציאת מצרים הרוחנית, של פתיחת פה בני ישראל, (דהיינו הבנה עמוקה של תכונותיהם המיוחדות), יצרה בריאה חדשה שאנו קוראים עם ישראל ואם כנים הדברים, זכינו להבין באופן מדויק את דברי התנחומא שהמשיל יציאת מצרים ללידה פיזית - והכוונה ליצירת עם ישראל. [מדרש תהלים קיד] "אמר ר' אחא בשם ר' יונתן מהו גוי מקרב גוי, כאדם שהוא שומט את העובר מתן מעי הבהמה בזמנו, כך הוציא הקב"ה את ישראל ממצרים שנאמר גוי מקרב גוי." ולהעמיק בכוונת המדרש, נראה שלידת כלל ישראל התחילה כשהם מצאו את כח הדבור שלהם - את הרוח הממללא שלהם.





A Tale of Passover Seders

Mr. Len Grunstein

Passover is a time of joy, celebration, family, warmth and friendship. My first memory of a Seder was in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in 1957.

My aunt Shaindel, of blessed memory, hosted it in the storage shed, at the back of her grocery store. We sat on wooden milk crates, around a jerry-rigged table made with a plywood sheet of wood, which also rested on milk crates. The table was covered with a white tablecloth and all the traditional symbols of Passover, including matzo, marror and charoset, were displayed. I was attired in the new suit my dad, of blessed memory, had made for me. He had studied tailoring at an ORT school in Italy, while recovering from the horrors of the Holocaust and Auschwitz. The suit consisted of a riding jacket and breeches. Of course, I also wore my favorite cowboy boots from Sears and sported toy six guns in dual holsters around my waist.

It was a glorious experience. Yet today, I can't help but marvel at the extraordinary resilience and determination of my father to carry on, despite all the suffering he had endured. What's more, he motivated himself to build a family in a strange new land and re-establish a traditional Jewish household. He was so happy at the Seder, reciting the Kiddush, reading the Haggadah out loud, singing the melodies he had heard at home and introducing us to all the Jewish rituals and traditions he remembered from his own childhood. He had a strong and beautiful voice. When he sang, I remember my mom, aunts and uncles tearing up, as they too remembered how

life had been in the old country. Their childhoods had been ripped away by the Nazis and their cohorts. Each had a miraculous tale of survival. In that intimate setting, I too felt how grateful they were to be alive, together with us, celebrating the Holiday of Passover at the Seder. As we clung to each other, the warmth of the moment enveloped us. It is a memory I will always treasure.

What is it about Passover that makes it so special? It brings out so much good in people. In our times, the Seder is often associated with luxurious surroundings, bountiful food and good wine; but this has not always been the case. It was not so long ago that Jews in Nazi concentration camps celebrated Passover, even as they were starved, beaten and all but worked to death. There are reports of those who bravely conducted a Seder in the camps, by each reciting those parts of the Haggadah they remembered. There was no food, let alone matzo to eat. How to explain that kind of grit and determination to carry on an ancient tradition that seemed so remote from their circumstances? How were they able to sing about the miraculous redemption from Egypt, despite being slave laborers and in the face of near certain death?

This was not the first time that the Jewish people celebrated a Passover Seder under exceedingly dire circumstances. The Haggadah speaks of a Passover Seder that was located in Bnei Brak. It likely occurred during the time of the Hadrianic persecutions, when circumcisions and the study of the Torah had been

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outlawed¹, prior to the Bar Kochba revolt.

The Haggadah reports² that Rabbis Eliezer, Yehoshua, Elazar ben Azariah, Akiva and Tarfon attended this Seder. Each was a distinguished Sage, leader and outstanding personality, in his own right. Rabban Gamliel was not among those listed. It is suggested this was because he had already passed on by that time³.

Rabban Gamliel was a commanding figure both by virtue of his lineage and personality. As a lineal descendant of Gamliel the Elder, of the royal family of David, he was a target of the Roman authorities. They sought to root out any possibility of revolt, in the disastrous aftermath of the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE. He was saved by Rabban Yochanan ben Zakai's peace initiative with Vespasian⁴, which spared him from a fate similar to his father, who was among the Ten Martyrs⁵. Rabban Gamliel went on to head up the Sanhedrin in Yavne, which had previously been established by Rabbi

Yochanan ben Zakai. He became the leader of the Jewish people in Israel and enjoyed a measure of recognition by the governing Roman authorities.

During his tenure, he accomplished much to establish the spiritual infrastructure, which enabled the Jewish people to cope and even thrive in the post-Temple period and to date. This included fixing the Shemoneh Esrei prayer⁶ in place of the sacrificial service in the Temple⁷. He was aided in his mission by a band of extraordinarily talented, capable and accomplished individuals, who included Rabbis Yehoshua, Akiva and Elazar ben Azariah. Whether it was a diplomatic mission to Rome⁸ or visiting the ruins of the Second Temple in Jerusalem, they would often accompany Rabban Gamliel. They were sometimes referred to as Zekeinim⁹.

Thus, the Mishna¹⁰ reports Rabban Gamliel was traveling on a ship with the Zekeinim, around the time of Passover.¹¹ It then goes on to relate the discussions among them, naming Rabbis Yehoshua,

1 Babylonian Talmud Tractate Brachot, at page 61b and Midrash Bereishit Rabbati, Parshat Lech Lecha 17:1. See also Historia Augusta, Hadrianus 14.2, *The Legislation of Hadrian and Antonius Pious against Circumcision*, by E. Mary Smallwood and Justinian's Digest XLVIII, Tit. 8. Concerning the Cornelian law relating to assassins and poisoners, Section 4. Ulpianus, On the Duties of Proconsul, Book VII. However, it should be noted that there was also an exception for Jews set forth in provision 11. Modestinus, Rules, Book VI, below in the same section of Justinian's Digest. This provision may have either been suspended at the time or been a later addition to the laws. As Edward Gibbons reports in Chapter 16 of *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, at page 206, Antonius the Pious, who reigned after Hadrian, once more granted the Jews permission to circumcise their children. Reference should also be made to Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Yevamot, at page 72a and Tosefta Shabbos 16:6, which note that many were circumcised during the time of Bar Kochba.

2 Passover Haggadah, Section of Magid. See also Maimonides, Hilchot Chometz U'Matzo 9:5.

3 See *Toldot Tanaim V'Amoraim Volume I*, at page 318, by Aaron Hyman, which describes how Rabban Gamliel passed away a few years prior to the Revolt of Bar Kochba. This was after Hadrian had first granted authority to rebuild the Beit HaMikdash and then rescinded it and adopted decrees against the Jews. See also Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Eruvin, at page 41a, which notes Rabbi Yehoshua survived Rabban Yochanan and a similar account in Tosefta Ta'anit 2:6. Rabbi Yehoshua was a contemporary of Rabban Gamliel and student of Rabban Yochanan ben Zakai (Avot 2:8). Rabbi Yehoshua was also a teacher of Rabbi Akiva (Brachot 62a).

4 Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Gittin, at page 56b.

5 Otzar HaMidrashim, Asarah Harugei Malkhut, Midrash Eleh Ezekerah.

6 Including the 19th Bracha of V'LaMalshinim.

7 See Babylonian Talmud, Tractates Megillah (page 17b) and Brachot (page 28b).

8 See, for example, Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Makkot, at page 24b.

9 Literally, Elders.

10 Tractate Ma'aser Sheni 5:9.

11 I make this assumption because at issue was the immediate need to take Ma'aser, which is a requirement at harvest time, which coincides with the Holiday of Passover.

Mr. Grunstein's article has been dedicated in memory of Mr. Harry Grunstein

צבי מאיר בן משה יהונתן ז"ל



Akiva and Elazar ben Azariah, as the Zekeinim. The Talmud¹² uses a similar formulation, in parallel reports of the incident, introducing the story with the term Zekeinim and then identifying these individuals.

Rabbis Yehoshua, Elazar ben Azariah and Akiva were among Rabban Gamliel's regular traveling companions. There was a report of another such voyage on a ship, at Succoth time¹³, involving a lulav and etrog. This time, all the participants are just named, without the prefatory term Zekeinim. However, the parallel account in the Tosefta¹⁴ uses only the shorthand term Zekeinim, without identifying the other parties accompanying Rabban Gamliel on the trip¹⁵. A similar report of this incident is set forth in the Sifra.¹⁶ It also introduces the parties as Rabban Gamliel and the Zekeinim and then identifies them as Rabbis Yehoshua, Elazar ben Azariah and Akiva.

Rabbis Elazar ben Azariah and Akiva were often identified as being among the Zekeinim, including in the group who paid a Shiva call to Rabbi Yishmael,¹⁷ visited Rabbi Eliezer when he was sick¹⁸ and then came together after he passed away.¹⁹ They also traveled with Rabban Gamliel on social occasions, such as when Rabban Gamliel was shopping for meat for his son's wedding feast.²⁰

It is therefore suggested, absent other evidence to the contrary, when the Talmud, Tosefta or Midrash make reference to an incident involving Rabban Gamliel in the company of the Zekeinim, the group likely includes Rabbis Yehoshua, Akiva and Elazar ben Azariah.²¹

This might shed new light on another Seder reported in the Tosefta,²² which was attended by Rabban Gamliel and the Zekeinim. This one was held in Lud, not Bnei Brak, at the home of Boethus ben Zinin. It is respectfully submitted that the individuals comprising the Zekeinim included the ubiquitous Rabbis Yehoshua, Akiva and Elazar ben Azariah. Why presume otherwise, as some have suggested? The premise that Rabban Gamliel and these other august members of his regular retinue were somehow at odds over some political or other issue, which required that Rabban Gamliel be at one Seder in Lud and they be at a separate one in Bnei Brak, rings hollow. Indeed, as discussed in this article, these two Seders likely occurred at different times and under exceedingly different circumstances.

Of course, this does not mean that these Sages didn't have any disagreements on issues of Halacha. They most certainly did,²³ on a variety of issues, as reported in the Talmud,²⁴ but this did not keep them apart. They faced Rome and the acute challenges of

12 Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Kiddushin, at pages 26b-27a. There is also a similar report in Tractate Bava Metzia, at pages 11a-b, as well as, in Jerusalem Talmud, Tractate Ma'aser Sheni 5:4, at page 31b..

13 Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Sukkah, at page 41b.

14 Tosefta, Tractate Sukkah 2:13.

15 Interestingly, the Yalkut Shimoni, Remez 65:12 also mentions each of the individuals by name like the account in Tractate Sukkah, noted above.

16 Sifra Emor 16:2.

17 Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Moed Katan, at page 28b.

18 Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Sanhedrin, at page 101a. See also a parallel account in the Sifrei, Devarim 32:17, which does not use the term Zekeinim, but identifies the same parties, as noted above. See further the parallel accounts in the Yalkut Shimoni on Nach 246:1 and Mechilta D'Rabbi Yishmael 20:20, both of which first use the term Zekeinim and then identify the same parties, as noted above.

19 Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Gittin, at page 83a and Sifrei Devarim 269:7.

20 Babylonian Talmud, Tractates Chulin, at page 91b and Makkot, at page 14a.

21 Cf. Tosefta Brachot 4:12, which references Rabban Gamliel and the Zekeinim, but only mentions Rabbi Akiva by name. There appears to be a parallel presentation of the same incident in Jericho involving eating dates, with some additional details, where similarly only Rabbi Akiva is mentioned by name. See also Tosefta Beitsa 2:8, involving a visit by Rabban Gamliel and the Zekeinim to Rome, where once again only Rabbi Akiva is mentioned by name. It is also interesting to note, Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Sukkah, at page 23, records that Rabban Gamliel and Rabbi Akiva were together on a sea voyage and Rabbi Akiva built a Sukkah on the ship.

22 Tosefta Pesachim 10:12 and also 10:8.

23 See Maimonides, Introduction to the Mishna 28:3, where he notes that the Talmud reports disagreements between and among Rabbis Akiva, Eliezer and Yehoshua, as well as, between Rabbi Akiva and Rabbis Tarfon and Elazar ben Azariah and, similarly, between them and Rabban Gamliel.

24 See, for example, Mishna, Tractates Rosh Hashanah 2:9; Zevachim 9:1; and Ketubot 1:6-9; as well as, Babylonian Talmud, Tractates Rosh



how to recreate Jewish life after the destruction of the Second Temple, together, as elder members of the Sanhedrin in Yavne.

We can learn much from the way they respected each other, despite any heartfelt differences of opinion. This is illustrated in the incident reported in Kallah Rabbati.²⁵ Once again the story is introduced with a reference to the Zekeinim, who traveled to an interior kingdom to meet a philosopher. By now, it should be no surprise that the group was composed of Rabban Gamliel and Rabbis Yehoshua, Akiva and Elazar ben Azariah. The philosopher took notice of the respect they showed Rabban Gamliel, as they urged him forward, so that he would be greeted first upon arrival. These are not the actions of people who allow disagreements about ideas to degrade into clashes of personalities. They are examples of how great people love, respect and treasure each other, despite their differences.

This is also one of the implied themes of the Haggadah, which describes how the Rabbis gathered together for the Seder and recounted the story of the miraculous Exodus from Egypt. The discussion evolved into a Halachic one about whether there is a Biblical requirement to mention the Exodus from Egypt in the evening. The Haggadah²⁶ records that Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah declared he was like a seventy-year-old man, but he could not win the debate with the Sages about reciting a remembrance to the Exodus from Egypt at night, until Ben Zoma derived it from a Biblical verse.²⁷ He did this by interpreting the reference to “All” in the verse *‘All the days of your life’* to mean including the nights.

The Sages disagreed, arguing the phrase ‘days of your life’ meant the present world and prefacing it with the word “All” was intended to include the era of the Messiah, as well. The Talmud²⁸ goes on to report the response of Ben Zoma to the Sages. It is particularly poignant in the context of the Haggadic Seder. He disagrees with the Sage’s interpretation and asserts²⁹ the memory of the Exodus from Egypt would be supplanted by the recognition of G-d’s ingathering of the exiles from all over the world, in the Messianic era.

Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah also had a Halachic disagreement with Rabbi Akiva concerning the time period within which the Passover sacrifice had to be consumed and, by extension, when the story of the miraculous Exodus was to be recounted. He asserted the obligation extended only until midnight and Rabbi Akiva held it applied for the entire night, until daybreak.³⁰ What, then, was Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah doing at the Seder in Bnei Brak, past mid-night, if everyone was still discussing only the miraculous Exodus from Egypt?

Rav Asher Weiss³¹ poses this issue in a somewhat humorous fashion by suggesting a possible scenario, which illustrates the practical aspects of the disagreement. Imagine that in the middle of the night of the Haggadic Seder in Bnei Brak, Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah got up to leave. Rabbi Akiva would have asked him why he was departing. Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah might have answered, he was going to the Beit Midrash to continue with his regular course of study of say, Bava Metzia, since, he believed the Mitzvah of recounting the miraculous Exodus from

Hashanah (page 25a); Brachot (pages 27b-28a); Kiddushin (page 75a); Beitzah (page 24a); Eruvin (pages 41a and 43a); Sanhedrin (page 34a); and Bava Kamma (page 74b); as to disagreements between Rabbi Yehoshua and Rabban Gamliel. See also Tractate Brachot (page 27b) describing Rabban Gamliel being deposed by the Sages at Yavne and then (page 28a) his restoration, as a part of the reconciliation that occurred. See also the description of the touching reconciliation between Rabban Gamliel and Rabbi Yehoshua in Tractate Rosh Hashanah (page 25b). In this regard, it is also important to note the efforts made respectfully to treat Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah, as an integral part of this process. See also, for example, as to disagreements between Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah, Tractates Peaschim (page 120); Pesachim (page 96a); Menachot (page 89a); Bava Batra (page 81b) and, similarly, parallel texts in Chullin (page 131b), Ketubot (page 26a), as well as, Yevamot (page 86a); Zevachim (page 57b); and Brachot (page 9a).

25 Babylonian Minor Tractate, Kallah Rabbati 7:3.

26 See also Mishna, Tractate Brachot 1:5.

27 Deuteronomy 16:3.

28 Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Brachot, at page 12b.

29 Based on Jeremiah 23:7-8.

30 Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Zevachim, at page 57b (see also Mishna and discussion at pages 56b-57b).

31 In a discussion of this subject with the author.



Egypt extended only until mid-night and not beyond. Rabbi Akiva could have responded by suggesting they could accommodate him by continuing their discussions with the study of Pesachim. After all, it also constituted learning of Torah and Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah assented. The compromise suggested by Rabbi Akiva was inspired. It was symptomatic of the resilience and flexibility that characterized the enduring relationships among these giants of Torah, despite disagreements about law and other matters.

The Haggadah also intersperses other references to Halachic matters,³² within its narrative of the Passover story of miracles.³³ Thus, for example, in the description of the Four Sons, the wise one asks what are these *edot*, *chukim* and *mishpatim* that G-d commanded. The Haggadah scripts an answer, which is purely Halachic that as per the laws of the Passover offering, don't eat an Affikomen after the Passover offering is consumed.³⁴ The response to the wicked one's query is a combination Halachic, historical and philosophical lecture. The Haggadah notes that because of our faith in G-d, as demonstrated by bringing the Passover offering in Egypt, under the dire circumstances then extant, we merited being redeemed from Egypt. However, by excluding himself from the collective experience and fate of the Jewish people, he was, in effect, denying any faith in G-d. Therefore, had he been in Egypt at the time, he would not have merited redemption. The simple son is educated about the miraculous Exodus from Egypt, implicit in the reference to the figuratively strong hand of G-d. The one who doesn't know enough to ask receives substantively the same lecture as the wicked one, but without the recriminations³⁵.

Interestingly, the Jerusalem Talmud³⁶ changes the

order of responses, so that the simple son receives the answer designated for the wise one in the Haggadah and vice versa. It also adds a further Halachic lesson concerning how a person should not leave the originally designated Korban Pesach eating group to join another.

The digression from purely re-telling the miraculous story of the Exodus to a study of the laws of Pesach might also help explain another seeming mystery in the Haggadic presentation of the events at the Seder in Bnei Brak. The named Sages were deeply involved in the Seder the entire night. As daybreak was approaching, their students advised them that the time for reciting the Shema had arrived. It might be asked why such illustrious Sages required a reminder about it being time to say the Shema? Were all of them so intensely absorbed in the discussions that no one noticed the time? Furthermore, why were the students so bold as to interrupt the proceedings for this purpose? Moreover, what about the overriding principle of involvement in the performance of a mitzvah exempts performance of another?

These issues are treated, in practice, in another incident reported in the Tosefta.³⁷ It describes how Rabbi Yehuda, a student of Rabbi Akiva,³⁸ was walking along behind Rabbis Akiva and Elazar ben Azariah, who were deeply involved in community affairs.³⁹ Rabbi Yehuda noticed that the optimal time for reciting the Shema had come and passed, as Rabbis Akiva and Elazar ben Azariah continued to perform their duties. He did not interrupt them and noticed, when they later had a moment, they did recite the Shema. In essence, while they were involved in performing a mitzvah they were exempt

32 See Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 481:2, which describes how a person is obligated to be involved in studying the laws of Pesach and the Exodus story and to recount the miracles and amazing deeds G-d performed for our ancestors, until overcome by sleep.

33 See also Maimonides, Mishne Torah, Hilchot Chometz U'Matzo, Chapters 7-9.

34 Interestingly, the Jerusalem Talmud, Tractate Pesachim, at page 70b, provides for this answer to be given to the simple son and the wise son to be educated about the miraculous Exodus from Egypt by the figuratively strong hand of G-d.

35 See Exodus 13:8 (and Ha'emek Davar commentary thereon) and 13:14, as well as Deuteronomy 6:20-21. See also Mishna Pesachim 10:5; Jerusalem Talmud, Tractate Pesachim, at page 70b; and Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Pesachim, at page 116b.

36 Jerusalem Talmud, Tractate Pesachim, at page 70b.

37 Tosefta, Brachot 1:4

38 Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Yevamot, at page 62b.

39 Rabbi Akiva was the Parnase HaTzibbur L'Aniyim (Administrator of the Communal Charity), according to Maimonides (see Rambam, Perush HaMishna, on Mishna Ma'aser Sheni 5:9).



from the performance of another, of reciting the Shema.

Nevertheless, it is also the case for most⁴⁰ that involvement in the mitzvah of Torah study is to be interrupted in order timely to recite the Shema.⁴¹ The story of the Bnei Brak Seder in the Haggadah might be analyzed in light of this principle. It is likely that Rabbi Yehuda, one of Rabbi Akiva's most gifted protégés, was among the students present with him at the Seder in Bnei Brak. This is where Rabbi Akiva, his mentor and teacher, lived and maintained his yeshiva.⁴² If the assembled Sages, including Rabbi Akiva, were involved in recounting the miraculous Exodus from Egypt at the time, then it would have been debatable whether they should be interrupted to prepare to recite the Shema at daybreak. After all, according to Rabbi Akiva, this mitzvah applied throughout the entire night, until daybreak. On the other hand, if they had switched to studying the laws of Pesach after mid-night, as noted above, then it was now mandatory to interrupt, in order timely to recite the Shema. Rabbi Yehuda, who witnessed how both Rabbis Akiva and Elazar ben Azariah acted in the other seemingly analogous, but actually dissimilar circumstances recounted in the Tosefta, likely appreciated the difference. He presumably knew they wanted and needed to be interrupted and would have been upset if he, as their student, hadn't done so.

The Talmud is replete with examples of Sages having disagreements with each other about matters of Halacha. Some also had differing political and philosophical views, as well. Thus, Rabbi Akiva fundamentally disagreed with how Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai dealt with Vespasian.⁴³ Nevertheless, this did not mean Rabbi Akiva couldn't join and

fully participate in the Sanhedrin, established by Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakai in Yavne. Similarly, while Rabban Gamliel often sought accommodation with the Romans, as most particularly described below, this does not mean that he and Rabbi Akiva didn't work together in furtherance of the best interests of the Jewish people.

Thus, as noted above, it is likely that Rabbi Akiva was with Rabban Gamliel, at the Seder in Lud, reported in the Tosefta. However, it is believed that the Lud Seder occurred at a different time and in a much different context than the Bnei Brak Seder of the Haggadah. The Bnei Brak Seder was probably convened in the depths of the Hadrianic persecution, at or about the time of the revolt of Bar Kochba.⁴⁴ It is suggested the Lud Seder was held during a time of relative calm in Israel, when compared to the upheavals that occurred in the Diaspora Jewish communities of Cyrenaica, Egypt and Cyprus⁴⁵. The Jews in those communities had risen up against Rome and Kitos,⁴⁶ a Roman general, had brutally and ruthlessly suppressed the uprisings. While all this was occurring, the Jewish people living in Israel continued to be at peace, under Rabban Gamliel's leadership.

It was then, as reported in the Midrash⁴⁷, that the Roman Emperor Hadrian made an extraordinary offer to Rabban Gamliel to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem. In those heady days, Pappus and Lilianus of Lud set up tables, from Acco to as far as Antioch, to provision those returning from the exile.

What might Rabban Gamliel and the Zekenim have done that Passover, upon hearing the glorious news and experiencing the euphoric response of the people that ensued? Would they be satisfied

40 Other than Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, as reported in the Jerusalem Talmud, Tractate Brachot, at page 8a and Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Shabbos, at page 11a.

41 See, for example, Maimonides, Mishne Torah, Kriyat Shema 2:5 and Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 106:3.

42 Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Sanhedrin, at page 32b.

43 Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Gittin, at page 56b.

44 Rav Yechiel Michal Epstein (the author of the Aruch HaShulchan), in his Leil Shimurim commentary on the Haggadah, suggests the Bnei Brak Seder occurred at a time of Roman persecution, after the destruction of the Second Temple.

45 Cassius Dio's Roman History, Volume 5, Book 68, Paragraph 32.

46 Also known as Quietus.

47 Midrash Rabbah, Genesis 64:10.



with just retelling the story of the miraculous Exodus in words, without something more in light of the new circumstances? Rabban Gamliel and the Zekeinim noted above had been around prior to the destruction of the Second Temple. They appreciated how vivid the Seder experience could be, when coupled with an actual Pesach offering, enabling a more authentic re-enactment of the original Exodus experience. Devoting the Seder to the study of the laws of the Pesach offering would emphasize the seeming miraculous nature of the times. It would also add to the sense of immediacy that the Temple and Pesach offering might imminently be restored.

It is suggested that this is what happened that night, at that fateful Passover Seder in Lud. The Tosefta records Rabban Gamliel and the Zekeinim studied the laws of Pesach all that night, until the rooster crowed in the morning. They then lifted the Seder table, made themselves ready and went to the Beit Midrash to pray.

Interestingly, the Tosefta⁴⁸ goes on to note the blessing to be said at the Seder was about the commandment to eat the Passover offering. This differs markedly from the blessing recorded in the Haggadah, which is based on the Mishna.⁴⁹ It speaks of G-d redeeming us and our ancestors from Egypt; eating matzo and marror; and the future redemption in Messianic times.

It is respectfully submitted that the entire episode recorded in the Tosefta was anomalous. The offer to rebuild the Beit HaMikdash turned out to be extremely short-lived. The Midrash describes how nefarious forces were at work almost from the inception of the newly proposed building project.

They advised Hadrian that building the Temple would cause the Jewish people to revolt. They calculatingly counseled Hadrian to test their thesis by insisting on a minor modification to the building plans of the Beit HaMikdash, which violated the strict Halachic measurement requirements for the layout of the Temple. This was intended to precipitate a revolt, which they ruthlessly thought would lead to the destruction of the Jewish people and they very nearly accomplished this goal.

However, the Sages acted quickly to quell any uprising, by sending Rabbi Yehoshua to Lud to talk to those who were about to revolt. Rabbi Yehoshua was magnificent. He asserted there was only an issue if proceeded with building the Temple, in accordance with the faulty plans. If there was no building then there was no issue to fight about. Why then revolt and, with certainty, die for a cause that was baseless; why not just refrain from building the Temple? It was a brilliant argument and it convinced most everyone to stand down.⁵⁰ An impending disaster was temporarily averted. Unfortunately, it did not stop Hadrian's continuing provocations that could not be so deftly solved and which inevitably led to the revolt of Bar Kochba.

Perhaps, the anomalous nature of the Lud Seder helps explain why it never made the transition from the Tosefta into the Mishna and Talmud. The report that the Seder only involved the discussion of the laws of the Pesach offering all night⁵¹ is also incongruous with the method of observance of the Passover Seder specified by Rabban Gamliel and the Zekeinim, in the Mishna, Talmud and the Haggadah.

The Seder, post the destruction of the Second

⁴⁸ Tosefta Pesachim 10:13.

⁴⁹ Mishna Pesachim 10:6.

⁵⁰ However, it appears this did not save the brothers Pappus and Lillianus. They were said to have been killed by Turanius (as set forth in Ta'anit below) or Turnus Rufus (as recorded in Ecclesiastes Rabbah below). Some translate the name as Trajan, Hadrian's immediate predecessor, as Emperor of Rome; but that would create an historical anomaly. Turnus Rufus was a Roman governor in Judea at the time. The coincidence of two people with the same names, being involved in this Midrashic report of the matter and the separate incident of their demise also occurring in Lud, is too compelling to ignore. Perhaps they were the same individuals, as described in Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Ta'anit, at page 18b and Rashi's commentary thereon, as well as, Sifra, Emor, Chapter 95 and Ecclesiastes Rabbah 3:17. See also Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Pesachim at page 50a, as well as Ecclesiastes Rabbah 9:10.

⁵¹ Cf. Mechilta D'Rabbi Yishmael 13:14, which reports Rabbi Eliezer asks from whence is it derived that a company of sages or their disciples are required to occupy themselves with the laws of Pesach until mid-night; it is this Biblical verse of Exodus 13:14.



Temple, was no longer centered on bringing the actual Pesach sacrifice and eating it together with matzo and marror. As the Mishna specifies,⁵² it was now all about telling the story of the miraculous Exodus from Egypt, linked to speaking out loud the three fundamental symbols of Pesach, matzo and marror, which Rabban Gamliel himself promoted as essential to the observance.⁵³ We figuratively experience the Exodus from Egypt, by recounting the miracles G-d performed to free us, visualizing the scene as if we were there too. We also inculcate our children with this experience so that they too appreciate this essential element of our faith.⁵⁴

It is also about the camaraderie of family and friends, as we celebrate our collective deliverance each year, as if we were there at the original miraculous Exodus from Egypt. As the children of survivors of the Holocaust, we are acutely aware of the miracle of deliverance in each generation.

It all started at the very origin of our people, on that first Passover in Egypt,⁵⁵ more than 3,400 years ago. It was then that we first began to experience the authentic traditions, known as the mitzvot. The first commandment⁵⁶ was to fix the month in which the event known as Passover was to occur. Everyone was to join in groups of family and friends. Each group was to slaughter a sheep and consume it communally, as a prelude to the Exodus from Egypt.

Consider the trepidation the Jewish people must have felt. Sheep were revered and worshiped as idols by the ancient Egyptians.⁵⁷ Yet, the Jews were

to corral these venerated sheep and set them aside for slaughter and personal consumption, days in advance of the celebratory event. Imagine the fervent atmosphere. There was a very real fear that a pogrom might break out,⁵⁸ had the Exodus not timely occurred. The tension was further enhanced by the commandment to use the blood of this original Passover offering to mark the lintel and doorposts of each Jewish home. What an inviting target! Nevertheless, the Jewish people were commanded to set themselves apart from the prevailing mores and customs, put themselves at risk and trust in G-d to deliver them.⁵⁹

As they sat closeted in their homes, enjoying that first Passover Seder with family and friends, a maelstrom surrounded them. It was at this time that G-d visited the final climactic Tenth Plague on their Egyptian oppressors. Then, they were ordered to leave Egypt, en masse. The experience must have been exhilarating. They had taken a chance, trusted in G-d and, as promised, were saved. They were even rewarded for their faith.⁶⁰

However, not every Jew had been willing to throw in their lot with their brethren.⁶¹ Many were fully acculturated and integrated into the fabric of Egyptian society. Life in ancient Egypt presented some of the same challenges we face today. It was a superpower, which attracted many talented people from around the world. It boasted a cosmopolitan, permissive society, steeped in art, science and the pursuit of pleasure. Not everyone

52 See Mishna Pesachim 10:4-5. See also Jerusalem Talmud, Tractate Pesachim, at page 70a-b, as well as, Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Pesachim, at page 116a.

53 See Mishna Pesachim 10:5, as well as, Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Pesachim, at page 116a-b. See also Maimonides, Mishne Torah, Hichot Chometz U'Matzo 7:5.

54 See, for example, Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Pesachim, at page 109a. See also Maimonides, Sefer HaMitzvot, Mitzvah Aseh 160: Sefat Emet, Leviticus, Passover 1:3; Minchat Chinuch, Parshat Bo, Mitzvah 21; and Aruch HaShulchan, Orach Chaim 472:2.

55 See Exodus 12:33-43 and 13:3-10.

56 See Exodus, 12:2 and Rashi's commentary thereon, as well as, the description of the observance in Exodus 12:3-51.

57 See Exodus 8:22 and Rashi, as well as, Ibn Ezra's commentary thereon. See also Genesis 43:32 and Rashi's commentary thereon.

58 See Midrash Rabbah, Exodus 16:3.

59 Maimonides, Guide to the Perplexed 3:46.

60 See Exodus 12:35-36, as well as, Rashi, Ralbag, Rashbam and Chizkuni commentaries thereon.

61 See Rashi commentary on Exodus 10:22. See also Pesikta d'Rav Kahana 11:11, as well as Shir Hashirim Rabbah 2:13.



was a slave.⁶² Indeed, the Midrash⁶³ records that some Jews benefited from Egyptian patronage and rose to prominence. These individuals were wealthy and well respected. Assimilation was prevalent and the Midrash⁶⁴ reports only approximately 20% of the Jewish people left Egypt, as a part of the Exodus. The rest didn't and were all but forgotten by history.

Has much changed since that original Passover Seder experience? It would appear we are facing many similar challenges today. Unfortunately, anti-Semitism is again rearing its ugly head. Whether it expresses itself as BDS, anti-Zionism or the plain old-fashioned variety, it's all the same; the issue is not a new one. There are also the problems of assimilation. Indeed, the Midrash's statistics differ little from a 2013 Pew study⁶⁵ of Jewish life in America. Yet, over 3,400 years later, we're still here and, as the Pew study noted above also found,⁶⁶ 70% of the Jewish Americans surveyed responded they attended a Seder. To put this figure in perspective, it is significantly more than those who said they fasted for all or a part of Yom Kippur⁶⁷ and more than three times as many as said they attended religious services at least monthly⁶⁸ or usually lit Sabbath candles.⁶⁹

What then makes the Passover Seder so compelling? It is believed one of the most endearing aspects of the Seder experience is that it's typically shared with others. This was an intrinsic part of its original observance, when eating groups had to be formed to bring the Passover offering.⁷⁰ It continues to this day, in our custom to invite people to the

Seder.

The tradition of sharing the Seder with family and friends creates a whole other dimension of experience than just sitting alone and going through the motions of a labored reading of the Haggadah, in anticipation of consuming a meal. This is particularly poignant because loneliness has been recognized as a genuine problem of epidemic proportions, with profoundly negative consequences.⁷¹

Is it any wonder that the Seder ritual begins with the announcement that all are welcome to join in the festive meal? It reminds us we are not alone. It is also noteworthy that the images of Seders, portrayed both in the Tosefta and the Haggadah, are studies in camaraderie. We are bound together by shared experiences and values with our brethren. This includes belief in the original miraculous Exodus and faith in the ultimate redemption, as well. The Seder and the stylized re-telling of the Exodus in the Haggadah reinforce these bonds.

The experiential effect of being fully engaged with others in relating the story of the origin of the Jewish people and the miracles G-d performed, including interacting with eager children anxiously anticipating their chance to offer their own insights, is incomparable. The effect is amplified by everyone's participation in the Socratic methodology of the Four Questions, as scripted in the Haggadah, which is designed to start a conversation. It's also a time to take pride in all the efforts made by the young children to play a gainful role in the Seder,

62 See Meshech Chochma, Parshat Vayera 8 and Jerusalem Talmud, Tractate Rosh Hashana 3:5, at page 17a.

63 Midrash Rabbah, Exodus 14:3.

64 See Rashi commentary on Exodus 13:18 and 10:22, as well as, Mechilta d'Rabbi Yishmael on Exodus 13:18, Mechilta d'Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai 13:17, Pesikta d'Rav Kahana 11:10 and Midrash Tanchuma, Beshalach 1:4. See also Ezekiel 20:8-9 and Radak commentary thereon.

65 Pew Research Center-A Portrait of Jewish Americans dated October 1, 2013.

66 Ibid and see also Attending a Seder is Common Practice for American Jews, by Michael Lipka, Pew Research Center, dated 4/14/14.

67 53%.

68 23%.

69 23%.

70 This formal procedure continued at least until the destruction of the Second Temple (and, possibly, for some time thereafter-see Babylonian Talmud, Tractates Sanhedrin, at page 11b and Chiddushe HaRan thereon: Pesachim at page 74b: and Zevachim at page 107b). It's also dramatized in the Jerusalem Talmud's version of the Haggadah, as noted above.

71 See The Loneliest Generation: Americans, More Than Ever, Are Aging Alone, by Janet Adamy and Paul Overberg, in the Wall Street Journal, dated 12/11/18; Loneliness: An Epidemic?, by Hannah Schultze, in Science and the News, Harvard University Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, dated 4/16/18; Loneliness Might Be A Bigger Health Risk Than Smoking Or Obesity, in Forbes, dated 1/18/17; and Loneliness Rivals Obesity, Smoking as Health Risk, on WebMD, dated 5/4/18.



which serves to enhance the joyful moment. Their unabashed identification as Jews and sincere interest in understanding the meaning of the Seder rituals is inspirational and infectious. It often engenders animated discussions among the people, of all ages, attending the Seder.

In modern times, it's not unusual to have three and perhaps four generations, sitting together at the Seder in celebration of Passover. Good feelings and emotions are often generated, to the great and enduring satisfaction of those participating in the Seder. What an incredible setting to recite praises to G-d and joyfully join together to sing the traditional melodies found in the Haggadah. There is no denying that the feelings experienced at the Passover Seder transcend those of an ordinary meal. I daresay it's something spiritual; but at the very least it's a wonderful energizing experience that still feels awfully good even after it's done. Indeed, we look forward to renewing the experience year after year. Few who have experienced it want to miss out when it next occurs.

It does, however, take effort. Most things worth doing are worth doing well. Conducting a Seder in a watered down fashion just doesn't compare to performing it fully, in the authentic manner originally intended. Preparing for the Seder, including baking or buying the matzo, preparing the marror, charoset and studying the laws of Passover and the many sources detailing the story of the miraculous Exodus, serve to enhance the experience. So does the obligatory cleansing of any chometz. Perhaps, the effort to find the tangible remains of chometz might also be applied to the spiritual variety, as well, in order to cleanse our souls too. Man-made schemes and rationalizations that puff up a person

are no substitute for the humble observance of the mitzvot and faith in G-d⁷².

As Maimonides⁷³ teaches, it is the performance of the mitzvot that is transformative and an essential element in the process of achieving perfection. It is the means by which the soul trains the mind and body and habituates them to behave properly. By doing the mitzvot, precisely as G-d commanded, wholeheartedly⁷⁴ and with joy,⁷⁵ a person can achieve a higher level of consciousness and connection to the Divine. This is often manifested in the good feelings thereby engendered and the effect is long lasting and repeatable.

The mitzvah of hospitality, which is intimately linked to the traditional observance of the Seder, also takes on a special meaning in this context. As Avot D'Rabbi Natan⁷⁶ reports, Rabban Yochanan ben Zakai said to Rabbi Yehoshua, in a world where we no longer have the Temple and sacrifices to offer for atonement, gemillat chesed serves this same important function. The Talmud⁷⁷ expresses a similar concept, by noting so long as the Temple stood, the sacrificial Altar facilitated atonement for the Jewish people. Now, a person's dining table has taken the place of the altar in the Temple and it provides atonement through the mitzvah of feeding the poor⁷⁸ or guests.⁷⁹ What better place to offer genuine hospitality than at the Seder table?

The Passover Seder, welcoming guests⁸⁰ and hospitality are fundamental aspects of the traditional Jewish experience. Treasure them, because they're priceless. Let's all spread the good cheer and joyful experience of Passover and the Seder by sharing it with family and friends and may we all merit the ultimate redemption.

⁷² See Netziv, HaEmek Davar commentary on Leviticus 2:11.

⁷³ See Maimonides, Guide to the Perplexed 3:54. See also Maimonides, Shemonah Perakim, Chapters 2-4.

⁷⁴ Maimonides, Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Teshuva 9:1.

⁷⁵ Deuteronomy 28:47.

⁷⁶ Avot D'Rabbi Natan 4:5.

⁷⁷ See Babylonian Talmud, Tractates Brachot (page 55a); Chagigah (page 27a); and Menachot (page 97a).

⁷⁸ See Maharsha commentary on Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Brachot, page 55a.

⁷⁹ See Rashi and Tosafot commentaries on Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Menachot, at page 97a.

⁸⁰ Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Shabbos, at page 127a.





Time Travel and Sefirat HaOmer

Rav Eliezer Zimble

The mitzvah of Sefirat HaOmer charges us with counting the days from Pesach until Shavuot. This (relatively) simple goal of counting can become quite complicated when “time traveling.” Crossing the international dateline raises interesting halachic questions year round and even more so during the period of Sefirat HaOmer. This article explores the nature and challenges of the international dateline in halacha and in particular focuses on the complexity added by the nature of the mitzvah of Sefirat HaOmer.

Historically, the civil international dateline was established in 1884 as a result of the British empire’s need to have standardized time across the globe. The British empire created a system of 24 different one-hour time zones equally spaced 15 degrees apart. There is a problem with this, however, as counting time zones going west and counting time zones going east will give the same time of day but different dates. To solve this, an imaginary line was created for which one side is the beginning of the calendar date and the other side is a day behind. Since the line is complicated to deal with in daily life and the British Empire was the superpower of the day, the civil dateline was established as far away from England as possible, at 180 degrees away from Greenwich.

Halacha generally does not accept the civil international dateline and there is a machloket regarding the placement of the line in halacha.

The first possible source is based on an esoteric Gemara in Rosh HaShana 20b which rules

that sanctification of the new month (Kiddush HaChodesh) can only be performed when the new moon is seen before noon in Yerushalayim. Rashi and many other Rishonim understand that the ruling is a specific criteria for Kiddush HaChodesh and has nothing to do with a dateline. The Baal HaMaor, however, seems to understand that the Gemara indirectly demonstrates the existence of a dateline in halacha. He interprets the Gemara as only permitting Kiddush HaChodesh when some location on the globe will experience the new moon for a full 24 hours. This seemingly describes a dateline 6 hours east of Yerushalayim, making the latest point 18 hours west of Yerushalayim. The Gemara requires the new moon to be seen by noon (the 18th hour of a 24 hour period when starting at night) in order that the new moon will be experienced at the halachic dateline for a full 24 hours. When the new moon is seen by noon in Yerushalayim, those living along the eastern edge of the dateline will experience the new moon for a full day.

There is a machloket regarding the interpretation of the Baal HaMaor. The Chazon Ish interprets the Baal HaMaor in the simplest sense as establishing the halachic dateline as 90 degrees (i.e. 6 hours) east of Yerushalayim. Rav Tukacinsky highlights ambiguities in the ruling of the Baal HaMaor and argues that the intent was for a line 180 degrees from Yerushalayim.

Others argue that the Baal HaMaor’s ruling is not accepted in halacha, as most Rishonim disagree with his interpretation. The Shu”t Bnei Tzion and others

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argue that the original placement of the sun in the sky during Bereishit constitutes the dateline in halacha; the first location to experience sunset became the first location to experience the new date, and therefore remains the leading edge of the calendar date. Under this approach, the location of the dateline in halacha is similar to the secular dateline.

There is a further difficulty that many of the suggested halachic datelines run straight through landmasses. Indeed, the line of the Chazon Ish divides Australia. The Yesod Olam, a talmid of the Rosh, argues that it is impossible for such a line to exist; halacha cannot have a reality in which a neighbor on one side of the street is making Kiddush, while his counterpart across the street is making Havdala. The Chazon Ish and others agree and therefore rule that a concept of “*Greira*” applies: the landmass is “pulled” to share the date of the western portion, making it so that the halachic dateline “bends” around the eastern border to avoid dividing any landmass. Other poskim disagree with his choice of going by the western portion, and yet others reject the concept of “*Greira*” entirely.

The disagreement regarding the placement of the halachic dateline creates a significant challenge. Were there only one possible location, then we would know with certainty when the line has been crossed; however, the reality of a machloket makes it so that there is an uncertainty (*safek*) regarding the area in between the datelines of the various opinions (roughly corresponding to the area between the longitudes of Japan and Hawaii). For this reason, those traveling to the questionable region at the end of the week must consult their posek regarding which day, or days, to observe as Shabbat. Entering into the questionable region presents a similar problem regarding which day to count during Sefirat HaOmer.

There is an added complication in the case of

Sefirat HaOmer that reflects the essence of the mitzvah. Even when fully crossing the questionable region and entering a location in which there is unanimity regarding the date there is a problem. Depending on the direction of travel, crossing the dateline involves skipping or repeating a date. As the mitzvah of Sefirat HaOmer requires counting the next number on each successive night, it is unclear whether the person must continue from where he left off or repeat or skip a date. Many poskim advise attempting as much as possible to satisfy all of the opinions both regarding the location of the dateline and the debate regarding which night to count when fully crossing the questionable region. For Sefirat HaOmer, this would mean counting multiple dates. For example, a traveler heading east and fully crossing the questionable region on the 30th day of the Omer would count both 30 and 31 on the following night. Rav Soloveitchik; however, argues that such a suggestion is inadmissible as a solution. The Rav argues that the definition of counting requires the person to have absolute knowledge of the number reached. If young child is asked to count how many fingers he has and responds that he has 10 or 11, then the child probably does not yet fully understand the concept of counting. The process of counting requires absolute knowledge of the item or event being enumerated. The Rav therefore argues that attempting to cover one’s bases by counting for two nights would fail to satisfy the requirements of the mitzvah.

The halachic international dateline presents serious halachic issues year round, and in particular during the time period of Sefirat HaOmer. A person should consult with their posek when traveling to the questionable region. Taking the idea of the Rav homiletically, the period of Sefirat HaOmer requires us to have certainty in our lives as we observe Pesach and prepare for Matan Torah.

ABOUT SHA'ALVIM

Sha'alvim Educational Institutions began on the Kibbutz of Shaalvim (between Latrun and Modi'in) in 1961 with the establishment of the Yeshiva. Today, on a campus greater than 32 acres, more than 2,700 students arrive daily to learn, to study and to grow. Sha'alvim's programs begin in pre-school and continue through to the world renown yeshivat hesder for post-high school boys and includes overseas programs for men and women as well as kollel and training for rabbinic ordination.

At its core a successful Sha'alvim education is built on three foundational elements:



Values & Character

Above all else Sha'alvim places a very strong emphasis on the moral and spiritual growth of each of its students. The paradigm is the student with a combination of a high level of Torah knowledge and observance as well as "Yir'at Shamayim," a proper reverence of God. That success manifests itself in a person who is of high values and character at each and every moment, who integrates fully in to life in Israel and exudes the sense of "Torah Im Derech Eretz."



Learning Environment

Sha'alvim provides optimal conditions for every student who comes to learn on its campus. Students learn from and study with Rabbis and unique Torah personalities and educators many of whom live on campus. Many open spaces and sports facilities allow the students to be able to participate in a wide range of games and recreation that assist in building camaraderie and lifelong friendships as well as enhancing the overall atmosphere that surrounds the learning.



Social & Community Connected

The students and alumni of the Sha'alvim are known for their involvement in activities that benefit the community at large. Starting from a young age, students are encouraged to volunteer and give back. The students and graduates spearhead many projects and are found at the forefront of social involvement throughout the community and across the Land of Israel.

SHA'ALVIM INSTITUTIONS



Yeshivat Sha'alvim Hesder

The hesder program at Yeshivat Sha'alvim is known the world over as a premier institution of Torah study. The Yeshiva is a five-year program combining Torah learning and military service. The Yeshivat Hesder is built with four key goals in mind: Life preparation, Personal Growth, Meaningful & Impactful Service in the IDF and High-level Torah Study. Over the many years of the Yeshiva's existence more than 1700 students have studied within its walls. They now fill roles as educators, rabbis, doctors, lawyers, members of government and the full spectrum of Israeli and Jewish community.



Yeshivat Sha'alvim Moty Hornstein Institute for Overseas Students

For over forty years the overseas program has provided young men from the United States, Canada, Brazil, France, England, Belgium, Switzerland, and Australia the opportunity to learn side-by-side with Israeli hesder students. In 1990 the program was renamed the Moty Hornstein Institute for Overseas Students, in memory of Moty Hornstein, a"h, an alum of the Yeshiva from 1989. Together, the students develop study habits, learning skills, and middot to shape their character and guide them throughout their lives. Teaching toward the 'complete person,' i.e. the combination of intellect, character, spirit and soul, and providing personal attention so that each student can develop his own unique approach to Avodat Hashem is a hallmark of Sha'alvim. Over the many years more than 1700 young men have studied at Sha'alvim and are now found in leading roles in almost every Jewish community.



Sha'alvim For Women (SFW)

Sha'alvim for Women began 12 years ago with 45 students and currently boasts over 650 proud alumni across the globe. The program was designed to fill a void in high level Zionist Women's education. The SFW leadership and faculty have created an educational environment that promotes the ideals of Yeshivat Hesder Sha'alvim; a love for Torat Yisrael, Eretz Yisrael, Am Yisrael and Medinat Yisrael. The high level of learning at SFW provides the students with the analytical skills and abilities to tackle the most complex texts, while the exceptionally warm environment, along with the committed faculty and staff provide lifelong inspiration. Our alumni have taken on challenging careers in the fields of medicine, education, law and others and they have become leaders in their communities the world over. Some have even returned to SFW as faculty!



Shlomo Aumann Institute

The Shlomo Aumann Institute is an institute for research and publication of new and revised editions of sefarim. The institute is named in memory of Shlomo Aumann, Hy"d, son of Nobel laureate Professor Yisrael Aumann. Shlomo, an alumnus of the Yeshiva was killed in battle in the First Lebanon War. He was a lover of books and one who knew his works. The institute operates with his personality as its guide. The institute is engaged in publishing works of Rishonim and Achronim that are either based on manuscripts and/or original publications with an attempt towards comparing and correcting the works, their sourcing, notes and references for the purpose of benefiting today's and future Torah scholarship.



SHA'ALVIM INSTITUTIONS



Ulpana High School for Girls

Nearly 600 girls, grades 7 through 12, attend the girls' high school. The students come to Sha'alvim from many locations, near and far. The matriculation rate on bagrut stands at 95%. The educational philosophy teaches towards three goals: character development, reverence of Heaven and communal and social involvement. Programming and curricula are developed to further each of those goals. Additionally, classes and studies are structured for every student to succeed on bagrut exams at a high level. The students are given the chance to 'major' in biology, chemistry, literature, history, computers or the arts which is above the required three science courses and mathematics.



Yeshiva Ketana Derech Chaim for Boys

120 boys study at Derech Chaim. The four year structure of the Yeshiva differs from the typical high school. The first three years at Derech Chaim are dedicated exclusively to Torah study. All areas of Torah (Talmud, Bible, Jewish Law) are part of the curriculum and the style of learning is mostly in chavrutot directed and facilitated by the dedicated faculty. In the fourth year, the students are given the opportunity to study for the bagrut exams in a specialized learning program designed for the students. Approximately, 95% of the students successfully receive their bagrut certification.



Yeshiva High School for Boys

Approximately 400 students between grades 7 and 12 attend the boys' high school. The school is a national religious Zionist institution that lives by the motto of 'Yirat Shamayim & Excellence'. That sense of 'Awe of Heaven' is manifested in pursuing excellence in every field and educating the students to have a real sense of a 'living Torah', of continually deepening their learning, of increasing their happiness and of building great friendships and the regular performance of good deeds. This effort is greatly enhanced by a faculty that 'lives' for the students at every hour of every day.

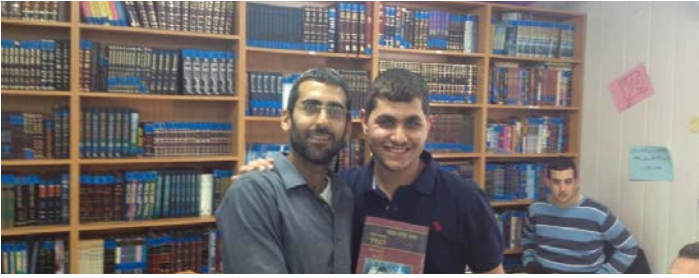


Shalhevet Elementary School for Boys/Girls

The twin elementary school programs on the campus of Sha'alvim serve many hundreds of boys and girls on a day to day basis. The students are from the local communities and there are a number of students who travel to Shalhevet each day as a result of strong commitment to education and a commitment to excellence. It is at Shalhevet where the boys and girls are instilled with the ethos of the Sha'alvim Educational Institutions.



SHA'ALVIM INSTITUTIONS



HaShlucha Program

The HaShlucha program responds chiefly to graduates of high school who wish to deepen and consolidate their spiritual lives and values but do not necessarily envision themselves in either a 'classic' Yeshivat Hesder environment, a pre-military mechina or fully integrated in the IDF. Sha'alvim built a program with a unique form of education, which succeeds in developing these young men from various backgrounds into high moral and character values individuals, full of content and motivation, and serving Hashem with great joy.



Na'aleh High School Program for Overseas Students

Na'aleh is a fully subsidized high school program in Israel. Students in the program receive a full scholarship to come and study in Israel which includes: Full tuition, free flight to Israel, room and board. Students in Na'aleh range from 10th grade to 12th grade and come to Israel from multiple countries including: England, Italy, France, USA, Canada, Russia, Australia and more. The goal of the program is to progress from 'uplan to bagrut' (Israel matriculation exams). The program subsidy is provided by the Ministry of Education.

