

Experiencing the Story which answers: "Who Knows 5?", with: "I unfortunately only know 4"

The importance of recalling the Divine salvation of our nation from Egyptian bondage cannot be overstated. Although a sense of gratitude and a historical perspective might have been enough for us to have realized the need to recall the Exodus, the Torah makes this necessity abundantly clear in a number of ways. Many *mitzvot* (such as *Mezuza*, *Sukkot* etc.), even those that initially might seem to be unconnected to the Exodus, are to be performed זכר ליציאת מצרים.

The Ramban notes that one of the central reasons for recalling *Yetziat Mitzrayim* at all these points is because when Hashem redeemed the Jewish people, He revealed Himself to the whole world in a supernatural manner. Therefore, recalling those events by transmitting it from parents to children in every generation imparts the knowledge of Hashem and His special relationship to our people forever.

רמב"ן שמות פרק יג פסוק טז

The great signs and wonders (of the redemption in Egypt) constitute faithful witnesses to the truth of the belief in the existence of the creator and the truth of the whole Torah. And because the Holy One, blessed be He, will not make signs and wonders in every generation for the eyes of some wicked man or heretic, He therefore commanded us that we should always make a memorial or sign of that which we have seen with our eyes, and that we should transmit the matter to our children, and their children to their children, to the generations to come, and He placed great emphasis on it...

(Translation from Chavel edition)

ובעבור כי הקדוש ברוך הוא לא יעשה אות ומופת בכל דור לעיני כל רשע או כופר, יצוה אותנו שנעשה תמיד זכרון ואות לאשר ראו עינינו, ונעתיק הדבר אל בנינו, ובניהם לבניהם, ובניהם לדור אחרון. והחמיר מאד בענין הזה כמו שחייב כרת באכילת חמץ (לעיל יב טו) ובעזיבת הפסח (במדבר ט יג), והצריך שנכתוב כל מה שנראה אלינו באותות ובמופתים על ידינו ועל בין עינינו, ולכתוב אותו עוד על פתחי הבתים במזוזות, ושנזכיר זה בפנינו בבקר ובערב, כמו שאמרו (ברכות כא א) אמת ויציב דאורייתא, ממה שכתוב (דברים טז ג) למען תזכור את יום צאתך מארץ מצרים כל ימי חיך, ושנעשה סכה בכל שנה: וכן כל כיוצא בהן מצות רבות זכר ליציאת מצרים. והכל להיות לנו בכל הדורות עדות במופתים שלא ישתכחו, ולא יהיה פתחון פה לכופר להכחיש אמונת האלהים. כי הקונה מזוזה בזוז אחד וקבעה בפתחו ונתכוון בענינה כבר הודה בחדוש העולם ובידיעת הבורא והשגחתו, וגם בנבואה, והאמין בכל פנות התורה, מלבד שהודה שחסד הבורא גדול מאד על עושי רצונו, שהוציאנו מאותו עבדות לחירות וכבוד גדול לזכות אבותיהם החפצים ביראת שמו:

Furthermore, as the Ramban explains, remembering *Yetziat Mitzrayim* instills within us *Emuna* in Hashem and His control of the world. Therefore, the message of the Exodus surrounds us everywhere, as it proves the fundamental tenets of our knowledge of Hashem (see R' Moshe Shapiro zt"l's *Re'ei Emunah* where he illustrates how all 13 principles of faith are revealed in *Yetziat Mitzrayim*).

The Daily Mitzva of *Zechira*

Beyond the *mitzvot* whose performance recalls the Exodus, there is a daily *mitzva* to explicitly recall *Yetziat Mitzrayim*, referred to as *יצירת מצות זכירת יציאת מצרים*. The nature of the obligation is discussed in the Mishna cited in the Haggada:

משנה מסכת ברכות פרק א משנה ה

One must mention the exodus from Egypt at night. Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah said: "Behold, I am like a seventy-year-old man, yet I could not win [the argument against the other sages] having the exodus from Egypt recited at night, until Ben Zoma derived it [from a Biblical source]." "[He derived it as follows:] It says (Deut. 16:3), 'In order that you may remember the day when you left Egypt for all the days of your life.'" "Now, 'days of your life' means the days; 'All the days of your life' [includes also] the nights." But the Sages say: "Days of your life" means the present world; "All the days of your life" includes also the era of Mashiach.

מזכירין יציאת מצרים בלילות אמר ר' אלעזר בן עזריה הרי אני כבן שבעים שנה ולא זכיתי שתאמר יציאת מצרים בלילות עד שדרשה בן זומא שנא' (דברים טז) למען תזכור את יום צאתך מארץ מצרים כל ימי חיך ימי חיך הימים כל ימי חיך הלילות וחכ"א ימי חיך העולם הזה כל ימי חיך להביא לימות המשיח :

The Mishna details that the source for the mitzva is the *pasuk* in Devarim:

דברים פרק טז פסוק ג

...למען תזכור את יום צאתך מארץ מצרים כל ימי חיך:

This *pasuk* clearly illustrates the need to recall *Yetziat Mitzrayim* daily, and the *Tannaim* dispute whether one must additionally remember the Exodus every night. (Other *mefarshim* cite other *pesukim* as well that might serve as the source for the daily *Zechirat Yetziat Mitzrayim*).

At first glance, this daily obligation would suffice to remind us of the Exodus while serving as a constant reminder of Hashem's powers, as the Ramban noted. This is the importance of the daily mitzva of *Zechirat Yetziat Mitzrayim*.

The Once-a-Year Obligation of *Sippur*

Yet, beyond the daily obligation of *zechira*, the Torah requires that every year on the anniversary of *Yetziat Mitzrayim* we do more than just remember the past events, but we tell its story in a fascinating manner. This mitzva of *sippur* is understood by the Rambam as emanating from the following *pasuk*:

שמות פרק יג

And Moshe said to the nation: "Remember the day that you left Egypt from the house of slaves, for with a strong Hand G-d has taken you out from this place, and do not eat *chametz*... And you shall tell your son on that day, saying, for this reason G-d did this for me when I left Egypt.

(ג) ויאמר משה אל העם זכור את היום הזה אשר יצאתם ממצרים מבית עבדים כי בחזק יד הוציא יקוק אתכם מזה ולא יאכל חמץ... (ח) והגדת לבנך ביום ההוא לאמר בעבור זה עשה יקוק לי בצאתי ממצרים:

These *pesukim* detail a form of remembrance that personally connects one to the historical experience, and involves "והגדת לבנך", telling over the story of what Hashem did to me, "עשה ה' לי", when I left Egypt.

The Past is Cyclical

One reason to connect to the events of the past on a deeper level may be due to our unique perspective on time. The Jewish approach to time is expressed by Rav Dessler as being cyclical- time doesn't pass us by, but rather we travel in time, returning to the points of time in a yearly manner.

מכתב מאליהו כרך ב עמוד 21

We do not celebrate the holidays as a remembrance, rather, we return to them, to their original essence- to the exact same *kedushat hazeman* (holiness of time) that is influenced, even now at this very moment. My master (Rav Tzvi Hirsch Broyde zt"l of Kelm), may the righteous one be remembered for blessing, that time does not pass over man, rather, man passes through time.

...שלא למזכרת אנו חוגגים את המועדים, אלא חוזרים אנו בהם לתוכנם המקורי- לאותה קדושת הזמן שנשפעת גם עכשיו כבעת ההיא. אמר מו"ר זצ"ל (הרב צבי הירש ברוידא זצ"ל מקלם) כי לא הזמן עובר על האדם, אלא האדם נוסע בתוך הזמן.

According to this understanding, the Seder night is not only the ideal time to remember the past, but actually involves reliving the very moments in time when the Exodus occurred.

Even if one views time differently, it is clear that the yearly mitzva of *Sippur* is unique, and possibly the daily *Zechirat Yetziat Mitzrayim* is a continuation of this *Sippur* obligation.

In fact, all the *money haMitzvot* (the Sages that counted the 613 mitvot) other than the Semak don't count the daily mitzva of *Zechira* in the *minyán hamitzvot*, although all would agree with the Semak that the daily recitation of the third *parasha* of Shema fulfills this mitzva *deoraita*:

ספר מצוות קטן מצוה קי

To recall the Exodus, as it says, "In order so that you shall recall the day you left Egypt", therefore, the Rabbis established the recitation of the chapter of *Tzitzit* in the Shema, and they also established [the beracha of] *Emet VeYatziv* and *Emet VeEmuna*.

להזכיר יציאת מצרים דכתיב (דברים י"ו) למען תזכור את יום צאתך מארץ מצרים, לכך תקנו חכמים פרשת ציצית בקריאת שמע, וגם תקנו חכמים אמת ויציב אמת ואמונה.

One reason cited for not counting the mitzva is because the *pasuk* cited by the Semak doesn't seem to be stated as an outright obligation, but rather an outgrowth of other mitzvot as the Minchat Chinuch cites from the Tzlach and others:

מנחת חינוך מצוה כא

For it is learned from the verse, "In order so that you should remember" and it is not said as a command, "Remember". Rather, it is going on what was mentioned before,

דנפק' מפסוק למען תזכור ולא נא' בלשון ציוי זכור אלא קאי אדלעיל לאכול פסח ומצה שע"ז תזכור אף דממילא שמעינן דמצוה לזכור מ"מ אין נמנה למצוה בפ"ע

namely, eating the Pesach and matza, that though them you shall remember. While it is naturally a mitzva to remember the Exodus [through eating the Pesach and matza], nevertheless, it is not counted as an independent positive mitzva.

For this reason and others, most *meforshim* see the once-a-year *Sippur Yetziat Mitzrayim* as the central mitzva with the daily mitzva of *Zechira* as either a facet of another mitzva or important in its own right, yet not counted for technical reasons. Understanding the differences between *Sippur* and *Zechira* will allow us to understand *Sippur's* centrality, and the significance of the Seder night.

Distinguishing Between *Zechira* and *Sippur*

Rav Soloveitchik enumerated numerous differences between the *mitzvot* of *Zechira* and *Sippur*. The first four distinctions he quoted in the name of his father¹:

- Consider the timing of the mitzva. The mitzva of *Zechira* is performed daily while the mitzva of *Sippur* is performed once a year.
- The mitzva of *Zechira* is fulfilled by mere mention while the mitzva of *Sippur* requires a detailed account of the many miracles that were performed during the Exodus. The entire process must be related, 'Commence with the humble beginnings of the Jewish people and culminate with the praise of salvation' (Pesachim 116a).
- While the mitzva of *Zechira* is a monologue, the mitzva of *Sippur* is a dialogue, preferably from parent to child, but even if the individual is alone he must have a dialogue with himself.
- The mitzva of *Zechira* is not its own mitzva but is part and parcel of the daily mitzva of *Keri'at Shema*; while the mitzva of *Sippur* is its own mitzva in the counting of 613 *mitzvot*.

The Rav then added a number of distinctions between *Sippur* and *Zechira* which his father had not pointed out explicitly:²

- The mitzva of *Sippur* requires praising Hashem. This is the reason for *Hallel* and the festive meal at the Seder.
- The mitzva of *Sippur* is limited to the events of the night of the fifteenth of Nissan but the daily mitzva of *Zechira* makes reference to *Kriat Yam Suf*, the splitting of the Red Sea, as well.
- The mitzva of *Sippur Yezi'at Mizrayim* incorporates the mitzva of *Talmud Torah*.

In short, these differences indicate that the mitzva of *Zechira* is simply a daily mention of the Exodus, while the mitzva of *Sippur* is the creation of a dialogue; a show and tell. Its aim is to relive the Exodus and impart its importance to oneself and one's children. In fact, the mitzva of *Zechira* is possibly not counted specifically because it is part of the mitzva of *Sippur*. Once a year we completely relive the event of *Yetziat Mitzrayim* on the anniversary of the day we left, we reenter into that time, and experience it personally, reminding ourselves about it daily.

¹ See Shiurim Li'Zekher Abba Mari Z"l Volume I page 14.

² Only one of these distinctions is mentioned in Shiurim Li'Zekher Abba Mari Z"l *ibid*, while the other differences are mentioned in other works of the Rav.

Remembering Requires Personal Experiences

Looking back at the context of the mitzva of *Sippur* tells us that this mitzva is performed by the Jews who enter into Eretz Yisrael, most of which didn't actually leave Egypt. Yet the Seder night allows all Jews to say, "עשה ה' לי בצאתי ממצרים", Hashem has done to me, because we actually relive not only recall the Exodus.

שמות פרק יג

And Moshe said to the nation:

“Remember the day that you left Egypt from the house of slaves, for with a strong Hand G-d has taken you out from this place, and do not eat *hametz*. And it will be when Hashem brings you into the Land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Emorites, the Chivites, the and the Jebusites, which has been promised to your forefathers to give you a land flowing with milk and honey, and you will do this service in this [Nisan] month... And you shall tell your son on that day, saying, for this reason G-d did this for me when I left Egypt.

(ג) וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל הָעָם זְכוֹר אֶת הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר יֵצְאתֶם מִמִּצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים כִּי בַחֹזֶק יָד הוֹצִיא יְקֹנֶךָ אֶתְכֶם מִזֶּה וְלֹא יֵאָכֵל חֶמֶץ: (ה) וְהָיָה כִּי יֵבִיאֲךָ יְקֹנֶךָ אֶל אֶרֶץ הַכְּנַעֲנִי וְהַחִתִּי וְהָאֱמֹרִי וְהַחִוִּי וְהַיְבוּסִי אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לְאַבְתָּיִךְ לֵתֶת לְךָ אֶרֶץ זָבַת חֶלֶב וְדָבָשׁ וְעַבַדְתָּ אֶת הָעַבְדָּה הַזֹּאת בַּחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה: ... (ח) וְהִגַּדְתָּ לְבִנְךָ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא לֵאמֹר בְּעֵבוּר זֶה עָשָׂה יְקֹנֶךָ לִי בְצֵאתִי מִמִּצְרַיִם:

This once a year event of *leil haSeder* is never supposed to leave the awareness of a Jew. Everyday one must remember the event described, elucidated and experienced on that night. How does one ensure that the effect of a mitzva performed once a year will remain fresh? The *Torah* understood that man is liable to forget. There are numerous sources that indicate a year is a period of time in which one is prone to forget³, and therefore, after a year has gone by since our last in-depth elaboration of the Exodus, we sit down again and focus. Only then, our daily reminder will have the ability to fulfill its role.

העמק דבר, דברים טז:

Similar to the father who tells his son a lengthy story that has a message, and every day the father hints to his son to remind him of the story, and every year the father retells the story again so it should remain in his son's heart. So too, the mitzva of *Sippur Yezi'at Mizrayim* is to tell a long story on this night, and then a daily reminder will suffice.

וכמו שהאב מספר לבנו מעשה שיש בו מוסר והספור ארוך כדי שעה, ובכל יום מזכירו ברמז קל כל הסיפור, ובכל שנה חוזר ומספר מחדש כדי שיעשה שורש בלבבו, כך מצוה לעשות סיפור ארוך בזה הלילה, ובכל יום סגי בזכירה לבד.

³ See TB *Be'rahkot* 58b, י"ב חדש, אין המת משתכח מן הלב אלא לאחר י"ב חודש, *a dead individual is not forgotten until twelve months after his death*.

Yet, our reliving the experience of *Sippur Yetziat Mitsrayim* once a year is essential for another reason as well; not only because it allows us to recall the past, but because the Jewish outlook on history connects past, present and future.

Experiencing the Continuum of Past, Present, and Future

At the heart of the Seder night is the challenge of eternalizing and internalizing the experience of the Exodus. It is possible to recall memories of past events, but it is far more challenging to create memories in the next generation that did not directly experience God's providence.

The Rav explains in the conclusion of the paragraph, “*Next Year in the Land of Israel*,” that our unique historical memory doesn't only remind us of the past but directs us towards the future as well. We attempt to instill within our children our connection to the holy land given our forefathers, simultaneously believing that in the near future we will merit returning to it again by the hand of G-d.

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Nothing more than the land of Israel symbolizes our historical roots and futuristic longing... The Jew is blessed, or if you will, burdened, with an experiential memory. He re-experiences events. Events never die for him. They are living experiences. Jews re-witness events

This statement of the Rav is consistent with his overall view of Judaism's unique memory. The Rav in numerous places speaks of the unique historical memory of the Jew who lives concurrently in the past⁴, present, and future.

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Judaism attempts to combine the experience of youth and oldness, and requires the Jew that he be simultaneously, and perhaps paradoxically, both young and old. ... The Jew must be deeply rooted in his past and inspired by a vision of the future. The time-awareness of Judaism is Recollection and Anticipation...

The Rav explains that the Jew is able to accomplish this incredible feat by the mastery of two doctrines, Experiential Memory, recalling experiences by evoking the feelings of the past, and Experiential Anticipation, becoming excited and rejoicing as if an event that will transpire at some unknown date in the future had already taken place.

On no other night is there a requirement to simultaneously experience the feelings of the past and pre-experience the revelry of the future. We commune with the Jews who left Egypt as we carry our sacks over the Egyptian border, while we anticipate next year in the rebuilt Jerusalem, performing the Seder in the holy temple. How is it possible? Once again the Seder presents the recipe for successfully integrating these feelings into one's consciousness.

⁴ The *mitzva* of *Sippur Yetziat Mitsrayim* itself is affected by historical moments. The Netziv contends that there is a difference between the *mitzva* of *Sippur* during temple times and the *mitzva* now, in the times after its destruction. In temple times, the main focus of the *mitzva* of *Sippur Yetziat Mitsrayim*, the star of the show, was the *Korban Pesah*. Then, the *Mazah* was merely a part of the festive meal and was not focused upon. After the destruction of the temple, partly due to the lack of the *Korban Pesah*, the focus of the *mitzva* of *Sippur* became the *Mazah*. The interaction between the *Mitzvot Ha-Layla* and the *mitzva* of *Sippur* is explicit in his works [See *Ha-Amek Davar* Exodus 12:8, Deuteronomy 16:1, 16:3 at length].

The unique Jewish time-awareness must be realized throughout the year; it must be taught and conveyed to one's children. How can it be done? The *Seder* sets the guidelines. At first, much like *Avadim Hayinu*, we must inform the child that our history is important. However, to fully identify with Jewish time, we need to create educational experiences of *Seder*-like proportions. We must tap into the imagery that will allow the child to begin to feel the relevance of our history, past and present.

On the *Seder* night, we awaken our children not only to the richness of their heritage but also to the vastness of their future. We open their eyes to depth of feeling they are capable of, encouraged and required to express and feel. This is a foundation of Jewish education: communicating that our tradition and history are not a foreign relic of a previous era, unimportant for the current millennium. Children must be made to feel that the events of the past impact their lives.

Ibid.

With the one hand the Jew receives the messages of the past and with the other he passes it on to the future. Through the merging of Experiential Memory and Experiential Anticipation the Jew transcends temporal bounds and penetrates into the eternity.

Who knows 5? I know 4? – What?

After understanding that the mitzva of *Sippur Yetziat Mitzrayim* is not merely retelling a story of past events, but reliving an experience that pertains to the present and future as well, we can understand a number of the *Seder* anomalies. One of the questions regarding the *Seder* is, “why recall the salvation from Egypt if we are still in a period of exile?”

Yetziat Mitzrayim marked the founding of our nation, guided by a purpose which would be understood when receiving the Torah, with the ultimate goal of travelling to the land of Israel, building a Mikdash, and serving as Hashem's ambassadors to the world about how to fulfill mankind's divine mission on this Earth.

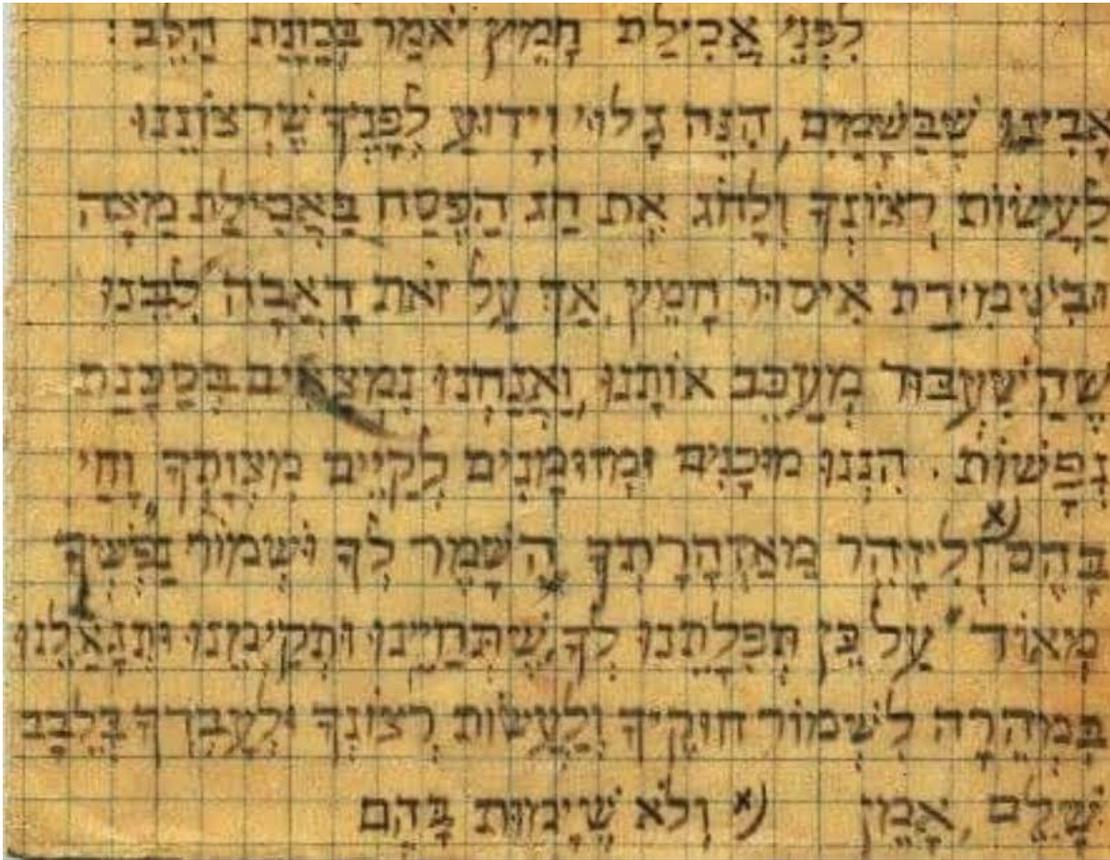
Yet, our celebration of *Yetziat Mitzrayim* is done on the anniversary of our redemption, when we are no longer in Egypt, but not in the Mikdash either. The fact that the Korban Pesach is eaten at night might also serve to recognize that we celebrate salvation even at times when we are in the darkness of exile.

נצי"ב, העמק דבר דברים טז:ג ד"ה "כי בחדש האביב"

And it is known that “night” hints to the darkness of exile, to allude to us that we still have much time to suffer the yoke of exile but to remain assured of the redemption, and Pesach comes at this moment to assist us to reflect and to remember this.

וידוע דלילה מרמז על חשכת הגלות, לרמז לנו כי עוד לפנינו לסבול עול גלות ולהיות בטוח על הגאולה, ובא הפסח בזה העת להתבונן ולזכור כל זה.

At times in history and in certain locales even in our day, this sense of exile can be much more keenly felt. In 1944, the Jews in Bergen Belsen wondered how to celebrate Pesach when there was not only no *matza*, but there was no means of survival without eating *chametz*. The Dutch Rabbis of the camp wrote a *tefilla* to be said before eating *chametz*, as this copy of the *tefilla* indicates.



The Tefilla written out and translated reads as follows:

Dutch Rabbis in the Bergen Belsen Concentration Camp

To be said with utmost concentration before eating *hametz* on Pessah:

Master of the Universe,

It is manifest and known to You we want to fulfill Your commandment that we celebrate the holiday of Passover by eating matza and abstaining from *hametz*.

But to our great sorrow our servitude prevents us from fulfilling these precepts.

We are not masters of our own fate and our lives are in danger.

Therefore, we are ready and willing to keep the mitzva: "So that you shall live by them" [v'chai bahem, Lev. 18:5] and not die because of keeping the mitzvot. Therefore, we are commanded to do what we must in order to remain alive; thus by eating *hametz* we will be keeping Your other precept, „Be ever so careful with your life." [Deut. 4:9]

We pray that You keep us alive and sustain us so that we merit to survive to fulfill Your commandments wholeheartedly in the future. Amen.

לפני אכילת חמץ יאמר בכוונת הלב: אבינו שבשמים, הנה גלוי וידוע לפניך שרצוננו לעשות רצונך ולחוג את חג הפסח באכילת מצה ובשמירת איסור חמץ, אך על זאת דאבה לבנו שהשעבוד מעכב אותנו, ואנחנו נמצאים בסכנת נפשות. הננו מוכנים ומזומנים לקיים מצוותך "וחי בהם" ולא שימות בהם, ולהיזהר באזהרתך "השמר לך ושמור נפשך מאוד". על כן תפילתנו לך שתחינו ותקימנו ותגאלנו במהרה לשמור חוקיך ולעשות רצונך ולעבדך בלבב שלם, אמן

There is no shortage of Jews throughout history who logically might have doubted the reason to celebrate *Yetziat Mitzrayim* while in Aushwitz or in the midst of pogroms. Yet, the heroism of the

Jews of Bergen Belsen's recognized that Pesach's message is still applicable, even for those who might eat *chametz* for the sake of Heaven.

Yet we who in our day are privileged to live in the land of Israel, or even in countries where most Jews don't feel daily persecution and more often than not are not living in poverty, might fail to realize that we are in *galut*, and *leil haSeder* is not only supposed to remind us or even allow us to relive the past, but also to bring about our future. In fact, the Meshech Chochma explains that the primary purpose of *Sippur Yetziat Mitzrayim* is for future generations (like ours) which are not living with their food falling from the Heavens, but are experiencing the darkness of difficulty; it is for them that the Torah commands us to recall and relive the Exodus.

The night of the fifteenth of Nissan not only marked the founding of our nation, but put us on course as a nation chosen by G-d to bring the world towards its goal; when we feel far from that destiny, the seder provides us with an appreciation of history, and a connection in the present to what we need in order to actualize ours and our nation's goals.

Is Pesach about Four or Five?

Possibly for that reason, the number 4 was chosen for so many aspects of the *Seder* even though much of the time the number should really be 5. In other words, we are intentionally only celebrating four aspects of the *Seder* even though we should really be recalling five, in order to indicate that the fifth is dependent on us bringing it about.

For example, we drink four cups for four *leshonot geula* (phrases of redemption) when there should really be five; we speak of four sons when the Lubavitcher Rebbe zt"l pointed out the fifth one is the one who doesn't even join the seder; we elaborate on four *pesukim* of *Parashat Mikra Bikkurim* even though the Gemara says to elaborate on the whole *parasha* which includes five *pesukim*:

משנה מסכת פסחים פרק י

And according to the son's intelligence, his father instructs him. He begins [answering the questions] with [the account of Israel's] shame and concludes with [Israel's] glory, and expounds from "My father was a wandering Aramean" until he completes the whole passage.

ולפי דעתו של בן אביו מלמדו מתחיל בגנות ומסיים בשבח ודורש מארמי אובד אבי עד שיגמור כל הפרשה כולה :

Just as we don't celebrate the fifth language of *geula*, והבאתי, with an extra cup of wine, we don't elaborate on the *pasuk* of ויביאנו in *Mikra Bikkurim* in *Maggid*:

דברים פרק כו פסוקים ה-ט

You shall then recite as follows before the LORD your God: "My father was a fugitive Aramean. He went down to Egypt with meager numbers and sojourned there; but there he became a great and very populous

ועניתי ואמרת לפני יְקוֹק אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲרָמִי אֲבִד אָבִי וַיֵּרֵד מִצְרַיִמָּה וַיָּגֵר שָׁם בְּמִתֵּי מֵעֵט וַיְהִי שָׁם לְגוֹי גָדוֹל עָצוּם וְרַב: וַיִּרְעוּ אֶתְנוּ הַמִּצְרַיִם וַיַּעֲנוּנוּ וַיִּתְּנוּ עָלֵינוּ עֲבֹדָה קָשָׁה: וַנִּצְעַק אֵל יְקוֹק אֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וַיִּשְׁמַע יְקוֹק אֶת קִלְנוּ וַיִּרְא אֶת עֲנִינּוּ וְאֶת עֲמָלְנוּ וְאֶת לְחַצְנוּ: וַיּוֹצֵאֵנוּ יְקוֹק מִמִּצְרַיִם בְּיַד חֲזָקָה וּבְזֵרַע נְטוּיָה וּבְמֶרְא גָדֹל וּבְאִתּוֹת וּבְמִפְתִּיּוֹם: וַיְבִאֵנוּ אֵל הַמָּקוֹם

nation. The Egyptians dealt harshly with us and oppressed us; they imposed heavy labor upon us. We cried to the LORD, the God of our fathers, and the LORD heard our plea and saw our plight, our misery, and our oppression. The LORD freed us from Egypt by a mighty hand, by an outstretched arm and awesome power, and by signs and portents. He brought us to this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey.

הִזָּה וַיִּתֵּן לָנוּ אֶת הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת אֶרֶץ זָבַת חֶלֶב וּדְבַשׁ :

The four questions, which might have initially been 3 (one for each of the 3 central aspects of the seder, Pesach, Matza, and Maror), is certainly missing in our *haggadot* one of the central questions- that of Pesach. The Mishna includes the *Korban Pesach* in the list of questions to ask:

משנה מסכת פסחים פרק י משנה ד

On all other night we eat meat roasted, stewed or boiled; on this night, only roasted

שבכל הלילות אנו אוכלין בשר צלי שלוק ומבושל הילה הזה כולו צלי

In our day when we no longer eat the Pesach, there is no difference for the children to ask about, so we replace this question with, "שבכל הלילות אנו אוכלין בין יושבין ובין מסובין". While we have four questions in our *haggadot*- there really exist a total of five!

While in practice the magic number of the seder seems to be 4, 5 seems to be the number that is *meant* for the seder:

- 4 phrases of *geula* should really be 5
- The 4 cups are missing the fifth
- 4 sons are limited to 4 because the 5th has chosen not to attend at all
- 4 questions are missing the fifth regarding the *Korban Pesach*
- The verses expounded in Sefer Devarim (*Mikra Bikkurim*) don't mention the fifth verse

The *pesukim* of *Mikra Bikkurim* are not just *pesukim* that refer to one who recalls the past while doing an action in the present, but they recall the past with **historical perspective**. The Jew who goes to deliver his *bikkurim* could easily forget that one's new fruits in the land of Israel aren't to be taken for granted. He is bidden to recall the past in order to appreciate the present and to return home from the Mikdash with a drive for improving the future.

This explains why we expound specifically these verse at the Seder. At first glance. It would be logical to perform the mitzva of *Sippur Yetizat Mitzrayim* by reading Sefer Shemot on the Seder Night. Yet, Seder night is not meant to be an exercise in recalling the past. It is an opportunity to relate the past to the present and the future. By taking the portion of the Torah which discusses how we relate to *Yetziat Mitzrayim* (*Mikra Bikkurim*), we don't just tell the story but delve into it, providing its background and its relevance for our lives. Sefer Shemot reminds us of the past- it is important to know, to study, and to understand if the past is to be appreciated in order to glean lessons for the present. However, the significance of the past is dependent on the way we act in the present and what we set as our goals for the future. We don't read history; we internalize a historical perspective that influences our lives currently.

Yet what does this historical perspective from *Mikra Bikkurim* entail? Firstly, that our sojourning in the land of Israel is the goal but it is not always a given.

רשב"ם דברים פרק כו פסוק ה

Our father Avraham was an Aramean, lost and exiled from the land of Aram.

אבי אברהם ארמי היה, אובד וגולה מארץ ארם .

The **אבי אובד ארמי**, generally understood to be a reference to Lavan although the Rashbam sees it as referring to Avraham, meant that the historical process often requires an exile to achieve its ultimate goals: **וירד מצרימה**. Although it seemed at first that this exile would see great accomplishment, **יהי שם**, **לגוי גדול עצום ורב**, it would soon be followed by Egyptian terror and bondage; only that recognition, followed by **אל אבותינו** **ונצעק אל ה' אל אבותינו**, led to the process of *geula*.

At the seder we recall each stage, we say **דיינו** recognizing our tremendous gratitude for each and every step, but we are supposed to leave the day with the charge to bring the fifth cup with the final achievement of the fifth *lashon* of *geula*, to return the Korban Pesach, and to be able to recite *Mikra Bikkurim* because the fifth *pasuk*- **ודבש חלב זבת ארץ הזאת** **את הארץ הזאת** **לנו את הארץ הזאת** **זבת חלב ודבש**.

The process has been set in motion, at times it needs exile to reach the next step, and at times it needs us to recall we are in exile as our surroundings belie the fact that we are stuck somewhere in Parashat Mishpatim while still hoping to achieve the *geula* of Sefer Shemot without another *Eigel*.

Let's hope this *seder* night allows us to relive the past, connect it to the present, and bring about the future we are anxiously awaiting. How that impacts the fifth cup at the *seder* will have to wait for a future post.