



בס"ד

15TH OF NISSAN
SHABBAT TZAV

APR 11TH - APR 20TH 2025

CANDLE LIGHTING 7:24PM

PESAH 5785

RABBI DAVID ELMALEH



BITTERNESS AND KINDNESS

A NIGHT OF GRATITUDE

THE TWO
DIPPINGS

SYNAGOGUE: 310 95TH STREET, SURFSIDE FL 33154

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General Hechal Shalom

Hechal Shalom - Or Oziel

בס"ד

Pesah Schedule 2025 - RABBI DAVID ELMALEH

SHABBAT HAGADOL - שבת הגדול

FRIDAY, APRIL 11TH

CANDLE LIGHTING: 7:24PM

SHIR HASHIRIM: 6:55P

MINHA: 7:10PM

FOLLOWED BY KABBALAT SHABBAT, &
ARBIT

SATURDAY, APRIL 12TH

SHAHARIT : 6:00AM / 8:00AM

STOP EATING HAMETZ BY: 10:50AM

DISPOSE OF HAMETZ /KAL HAMIRA BY: 12:05PM

EARLY MINHA : 2:00PM

SEUDAT SHELISHIT AT HOME BEFORE 4:32PM

PESAH פסח DAY 1

SATURDAY, APRIL 12TH

MINHA: 7:15PM

FOLLOWED BY ARBIT & FULL HALLEL: 8:24PM

CANDLE LIGHTING AFTER: 8:24PM

KIDDUSH AFTER: 8:18PM

(YAKNEHAZ ADD NER & HABDALA)

**TRY TO FINISH THE HALLEL OR AT LEAST THE
AFIKOMEN BEFORE HATSOT/MIDNIGHT: 1:21AM**

SUNDAY APRIL 13TH

SHAHARIT NETZ: 6:00AM

SHAHARIT MAIN MINYAN: 8:45AM

MINHA : 7:30PM

**FOLLOWED BY ARVIT & FULL HALLEL
COUNT 1ST OMER AFTER NIGHTFALL :8:18PM**

**KIDDUSH AND CANDLE LIGHTING AFTER 8:18PM
(FROM EXISTING LIGHT)**

AFIKOMEN BEFORE HATSOT/MIDNIGHT: 1:21AM

PESAH פסח DAY 2

MONDAY, APRIL 14TH

SHAHARIT NETZ: 6:00AM

SHAHARIT MAIN MINYAN: 8:45AM

MINHA & ARVIT: 7:30PM

COUNT 2ND OMER AFTER NIGHTFALL: 8:19PM

ATA AMARTA, BARECHENU, & YAALE VEYAVO IN AMIDA

YOM TOV ENDS 8:24PM - R.T: 8:56PM

HOL HAMOED

TUESDAY - FRIDAY

SHAHARIT NETZ: 6:15AM

SHAHARIT MAIN MINYAN: 8:30AM

MINHA FOLLOWED BY ARVIT 6:15PM & 7:35PM

COUNT OMER AFTER 8:20PM

SHEBII SHEL PESAH שביעי של פסח

FRIDAY, APRIL 18TH

CANDLE LIGHTING: 7:27PM

MINHA & ARVIT 7:15PM

HAG AMIDA AND ADD SHABBAT IN AMIDA

COUNT 6TH OMER AFTER NIGHTFALL

**Kerie Moed - Keraya - Meldado (Study Night of
Shebii Shel Pesah): Immediately after Arbit
(for Approximately 30 minutes)**

SHABBAT

SATURDAY APRIL 19TH

SHAHARIT NETZ: 5:55AM

SHAHARIT MAIN MINYAN: 8:45AM

EARLY MINHA : 2:00PM

SEUDAT SHELISHIT AT HOME BEFORE 4:33PM

MINHA & ARVIT: 7:20PM

COUNT 7TH OMER AFTER 8:22PM

CANDLE LIGHTING AFTER: 8:27PM

SHEMINI SHEL PESAH

SUNDAY, APRIL 20TH

SHAHARIT NETZ: 5:55AM

SHAHARIT MAIN MINYAN: 8:45AM

MINHA: 7:35PM

ARVIT: 8:05PM

COUNT 8TH OMER AFTER NIGHTFALL: 8:28PM

YOM TOB ENDS: 8:26PM R.TAM 8:58PM

**VERY IMPORTANT: ONE SHOULD NOT TAKE OUT ANY OF THEIR HAMETZ FOR
THE PREPARATION OF THE TRADITIONAL MIMUNA BEFORE 9:20 PM IN ORDER
TO GIVE THE RABBI THE CHANCE TO BUY BACK ALL THE HAMETZ.**

MIMOUNA: TARBAKHU U-TSA'ADU

DONATION MENU

Avot Ubanim \$150, **Kiddush \$500**, Premium Kiddush \$750, Platinum Kiddush \$1000, **Seudat Shelishit \$350**, Weekly Bulletin \$150, Weekly Daf Yomi \$180, Daf Yomi Masechet \$2500, Yearly Daf Yomi \$5000, **Weekly Breakfast \$200**, Daily Learning \$180, Weekly Learning \$613, Monthly Rent \$3500, Monthly Learning \$2000, Children's Shabbat Program \$500, Weekly Youth Program \$360.

Thanking you in advance for your generous support. Tizke Lemitzvot!

LEARNING OF THE MONTH

RENT DEDICATION:

We Would like to Wholeheartedly Thank our

**Dear Friends, Dr. & Mrs. Ari Benmergui
For generously Donating the Rent of Nisan 5785
In memory of her Dear mother Felicia Bat Miriam z"l
the 8th of Nisan
We truly appreciate it.**

**In this Merit May Hashem Bless you & your Wonderful Family
with all the Berachot in the Torah Amen**

Dedicate a month of Limud

**In Honor of Someone, for the
Refua Shelema, or Leiluy Nishmat...**

**And Help YOUR Community
GROW!**



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WHOLE FAMILY.
HASHEM SHOULD
BLESS THEM WITH
HEALTH, HAPPINESS,
& LONG LIFE,

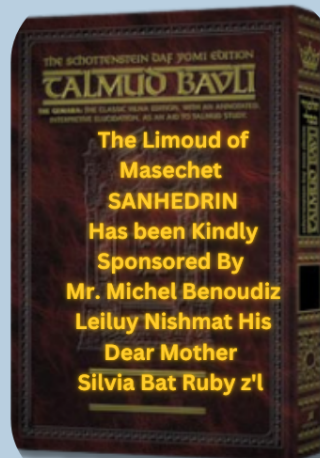
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REFUAH SHELEMA OF &
ABIGAIL BAT SARAH
FOR BERACHA &
HATZLACHA: DEVORAH
BAT SARAH, ALON BARUKH
BEN DEVORAH, EITAN HAIM
BEN DEVORAH, SHIREL
SARAH SIMCHA BAT
DEVORAH, AARON LEV BEN
DEVORAH & DAVID BEN
ABIGAIL HASHEM SHOULD
BLESS THEM WITH
HEALTH, HAPPINESS, &
LONG LIFE, AMEN.

THE AKKAD FAMILY

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אברהם בן
גרסייה ז"ל, שלמה
בן תמם ז"ל,
אליהו בן רחל ז"ל,
ותמם בת אורו ז"ל
תנצב"ה
HASHEM SHOULD
BLESS THEM WITH
HEALTH,
HAPPINESS, &
LONG LIFE, AMEN.

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Daily zmanim - March to April 2025 / זמני היום - חודש ניסן תשפ"ה

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Daylight saving time															ניסן תשפ"ה		
March / April 2025	לילה לרבינו תם R' Tam's Nightfall	לילה Nightfall -	שקיעת החמה Sun set	חדלקת נרות Candle Lighting 18 דקות -	פלג המנחה Plag Mincha	מנחה קטנה Mincha Ketana	מנחה גדולה Earliest Mincha	חצות Mid day	סוף זמן תפילה Latest Shacharis	סוף זמן קריאת שמע Latest Shema	הנף החמה Sun rise	זמן ציצית ותפילין Earliest Talis	עלות השחר 72 דקות Dawn 72 Minutes	דף היומי Daf Yomi			
	במעלות 16.1° שעות	במערות 16.1° שעות	במערות 16.1° שעות	במערות 16.1° שעות	במערות 16.1° שעות	במערות 16.1° שעות	במערות 16.1° שעות	במערות 16.1° שעות	במערות 16.1° שעות	במערות 16.1° שעות	במערות 16.1° שעות	במערות 16.1° שעות	במערות 16.1° שעות	במערות 16.1° שעות			
30 Sun	8:49	8:46	8:11	7:36	6:19	5:01	1:56	1:25	11:21	10:19	9:43	9:44	7:14	6:32	6:04	קג	ראשון
31 Mon	8:50	8:46	8:12	7:37	6:19	5:01	1:56	1:24	11:20	10:18	9:42	9:44	7:13	6:31	6:00	קד	שני
1 Tue	8:50	8:47	8:12	7:37	6:19	5:02	1:56	1:24	11:20	10:17	9:41	9:43	7:12	6:30	5:59	קה	שלישי
2 Wed	8:50	8:48	8:13	7:37	6:20	5:02	1:56	1:24	11:19	10:17	9:41	9:42	7:11	6:29	5:58	קו	רביעי
3 Thu	8:51	8:48	8:13	7:38	6:20	5:02	1:56	1:23	11:19	10:16	9:40	9:42	7:10	6:28	5:57	קי	חמישי
4 Fri	8:51	8:49	8:14	7:38	6:20	5:02	1:55	1:23	11:18	10:15	9:39	9:41	7:09	6:27	5:56	קח	ששי
5 Sha	8:52	8:49	8:14	7:39	6:20	5:02	1:55	1:23	11:17	10:15	9:39	9:40	7:08	6:25	5:55	קט	שבת
6 Sun	8:52	8:50	8:15	7:39	6:21	5:02	1:55	1:22	11:17	10:14	9:38	9:39	7:07	6:24	5:54	קי	ראשון
7 Mon	8:53	8:50	8:15	7:40	6:21	5:02	1:55	1:22	11:16	10:13	9:37	9:39	7:06	6:23	5:53	קיא	שני
8 Tue	8:53	8:51	8:16	7:40	6:21	5:03	1:54	1:22	11:16	10:13	9:37	9:38	7:05	6:22	5:52	קיב	שלישי
9 Wed	8:54	8:52	8:16	7:41	6:22	5:03	1:54	1:22	11:15	10:12	9:36	9:37	7:04	6:21	5:51	קיד	רביעי
10 Thu	8:54	8:52	8:17	7:41	6:22	5:03	1:54	1:21	11:15	10:12	9:36	9:37	7:03	6:20	5:50	קט	חמישי
11 Fri	8:55	8:53	8:18	7:42	6:22	5:03	1:54	1:21	11:14	10:11	9:35	9:36	7:02	6:19	5:49	קכ	ששי
12 Sha	8:55	8:53	8:18	7:42	6:23	5:03	1:54	1:21	11:14	10:10	9:34	9:35	7:01	6:18	5:48	קכא	שבת
13 Sun	8:56	8:54	8:19	7:43	6:23	5:03	1:53	1:21	11:13	10:10	9:34	9:35	7:00	6:17	5:47	קכב	ראשון
14 Mon	8:56	8:55	8:19	7:43	6:23	5:04	1:53	1:20	11:13	10:09	9:33	9:34	6:59	6:16	5:46	קכג	שני
15 Tue	8:57	8:55	8:20	7:44	6:24	5:04	1:53	1:20	11:12	10:08	9:32	9:33	6:58	6:15	5:45	קכד	שלישי
16 Wed	8:57	8:56	8:20	7:44	6:24	5:04	1:53	1:20	11:12	10:08	9:32	9:33	6:57	6:14	5:44	קכה	רביעי
17 Thu	8:57	8:56	8:21	7:44	6:24	5:04	1:53	1:20	11:11	10:07	9:31	9:32	6:56	6:13	5:43	קכז	חמישי
18 Fri	8:58	8:57	8:21	7:45	6:25	5:04	1:53	1:19	11:11	10:07	9:31	9:31	6:55	6:12	5:42	קכח	ששי
19 Sha	8:58	8:58	8:22	7:45	6:25	5:05	1:52	1:19	11:10	10:06	9:30	9:31	6:54	6:11	5:41	קכט	שבת
20 Sun	8:59	8:58	8:22	7:46	6:25	5:05	1:52	1:19	11:10	10:06	9:30	9:30	6:53	6:10	5:40	קל	ראשון
21 Mon	8:59	8:59	8:23	7:46	6:26	5:05	1:52	1:19	11:10	10:05	9:29	9:29	6:52	6:09	5:39	קלא	שני
22 Tue	9:00	9:00	8:24	7:47	6:26	5:05	1:52	1:19	11:09	10:04	9:28	9:29	6:51	6:08	5:38	קלב	שלישי
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24 Thu	9:01	9:01	8:25	7:48	6:27	5:06	1:52	1:18	11:08	10:03	9:27	9:27	6:50	6:06	5:37	קלד	חמישי
25 Fri	9:01	9:02	8:25	7:48	6:27	5:06	1:52	1:18	11:08	10:03	9:27	9:27	6:49	6:05	5:36	קלה	ששי
26 Sha	9:02	9:02	8:26	7:49	6:28	5:06	1:52	1:18	11:08	10:02	9:26	9:26	6:48	6:04	5:35	קכז	שבת
27 Sun	9:02	9:03	8:26	7:49	6:28	5:06	1:51	1:18	11:07	10:02	9:26	9:26	6:47	6:03	5:34	קכח	ראשון
28 Mon	9:03	9:04	8:27	7:50	6:28	5:07	1:51	1:18	11:07	10:01	9:25	9:25	6:46	6:02	5:33	קכט	שני

Sunday (Apr 27) 8:30 PM + 2 חלקים אייר: מולד חודש ניסן תשפ"ה Get daily sefirah reminders by email, text or Telegram > <http://alerts.myzmanim.com>

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Refuah Shelema List

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reuven Moshe Ben Eshter Sarah, Mordechai Ben Brucha Malka Shmalo, Yizhak Abraham Ben Sheli, Yosef Yizhak Ben Sara Hana, David Eliyahu Ben Miriam Mordechai Ben Mercedes Binyamin Simcha Ben Hilla Yosef Shalom Ben Devora Neima David Mordechai Ben Camouna Yosef Ben Esther Rabinovitz Yehuda Ben Lea Baroukh Yoel Shimon Israel Ben Pnina Jeanine Avraham Ben Regina Eliyahu Ben Tita Esther 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yizhak Ben Simja Michael Ben Aliza, Menahem Ben Shira Moshe Ben Rahel David Ben Freha Rina Mordechai Ben Miriam, Aviv Ben Luba Miriam Meir Ben Leah Yitzhak Ben Rahel Israel Ben Lea Isaac Ben Mesoda Haim Ben Marcell David Aaron Ben Rivkah Refael Haim Meir Ben Sima Chassa Liam Mimoun Ben Esther Yosef Zvi Ben Sara Yosef Mordechai Dov Ber Ben Hana 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simja Bat Esther, Rachel Bat Sarah, Nina Bat Rachel, Gitel Rina Bat Yael, Miriam Bat Sofy, Rahma Bat Simha Esther Bat Fortuna Malka Bat Dina Raizel Bat Miriam Leah Bat Rivka Sol Bat Perla Chana Bat Bilha Yael Bat Rut 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dalia Bat Roza Nadia Bat Saida Gila Esther Bat Estrella Mazal Tov Bat Corina Peril Bat Sarah Hava Bat Dora Emma Bat Haïa Heleni Orna bat Hen Hana 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sara Leticia Bat Mesoda, Alegria Simha Bat Esther, Naomie Bat Rarel Adda, Sivan Simha Bat Yehudit, Natalie Rachel Bat Nancy, Abigael Haya Bat Esther Madeleine Bat Esther Nurit Jacqueline Bat Rahel Marcelle Mesoda Bat Alegria Shira Yaffa Bat Sara Eva Bat Yael Khayat Camouna Bat Fortuna Ruth Nehama Bat Sara Karine Messoda Bat Simha Denise Dina Bat Fortuna Lea Hana Devora Bat Mazal-tov
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Happy Birthday in April

- 1st : Mr. Benjamin Cohen
- 8th : Mr. Michael Taieb
- 10th : Mrs. Batya Belecen
Mrs. Tiffany Lemmel
- 13th : Mrs. Eden Albergel
- 14th : Mr. Eliyahu Chocron
Mr. Sammy Maya
- 15th : Mrs. Tehila Taieb
- 19th : Mr. David Gad



Happy Anniversary To:



Nahalot of Nisan:

- 2nd : **Rajel Hola Ishto Shel Yitzhak Vaturi z"l**
(Grandmother of the Aquinins)
Yosef Amram Edery Bar Abraham Shelomo z"l (Cousin of R. David Elmaleh)
- 3rd : **Yaacov Courchia Bar Messoud z"l**
(Father of Dr. Jean Paul Courchia)
- 4th : **Mercedes Aquinin Bat Mordechai z"l**
(Mother of Mr. Saadia Aquinin)
- 5th : **Don Saadia Cohen Bar Cota z"l**
(Father of Mr. Isaac Cohen)
Shalom Bitton Bar Rachel z"l
(Grandfather of Mr. Ronen Cohen)
Estelle Esther Bat Mahklouf z"l
(Aunt of Mrs. Ilanit Taieb)
- 7th : **Rachel Tangir Bat Alia z"l**
(Grandmother of Mr. Simon Chocron)
Ruby Bat Saada z"l
(Mother of Mrs. Sylvia Benoudiz z"l)

- 8th : **Shemuel Ben Abraham z"l**
(Father of Mrs. Mireya Hayon Benoudiz)
Felicia Bat Miriam z"l
(Mother of Mrs. Simi Benmergui)
Camilia Bat Gimol z"l
(Grandmother of Mrs. Camila Benmergui)
- 9th : **Chana Bat Esther z"l**
(Grandmother of Dr. Max Nahon)
Seuda Bat Miriam z"l
(Grandmother of Mr. Amichai Shoshan)
Dina Hakimi Bat Sarah z"l
(Grandmother of Mr. Albert Gad)
- 12th : **Feivish Felix Ben Malka z"l**
(Father of Mr. Yaacov Aronovici)
- 18th : **Oro Bat Sinuru z"l**
(Mother of Mr. Shabetai Maya z"l)
Freda Bat Rivka z"l
(Aunt of Mrs. Ruby Mouyal)
Isaac Benhaim Bar Yosef z"l
(Grandfather of Mr. Jacky Benoudiz)
- 19th : **Hassiba Bat Djamilah z"l**
(Mother of Mrs. Jeanine Furfman)
Isaac Meir Ben Ruben Eisen z"l
(Grandfather of Mrs. Raquel Eisen Benoudiz)
Eliyahu Benmergui Ben Luna z"l
(Father of Mr. Abraham Benmergui)
- 21st : **Moshe Ben Abraham z"l**
(Uncle of Mr. Albert Belecen)



Membership benefits:

Participating in the growth of the synagogue community and contributing to its daily operations are key aspects of synagogue membership.

However, Hechal Shalom membership provides numerous benefits that contribute to personal, spiritual, and community well-being. These typically include:

Spiritual Growth and Meaning:

Access to regular religious services, including Shabbat and holiday prayers.

Opportunities to engage with spiritual leaders and participate in Torah study or educational programs for adults, teenagers and youths.

Community Belonging:

Membership in a supportive community that celebrates life events and offers comfort during difficult times.

Social activities that foster friendships and connections among members.

Community Support: A network of congregants to assist during illnesses, bereavement, or other challenging times.

Counseling, support and direction from the Rabbi and staff.

Lifecycle Services:

Support for significant life events such as weddings, Berit Milah's/baby naming's, Bar/Bat Mitzvahs, and funerals and Azkara/Nahala/Yarhzeit.

Members get first rights over Aliyot, Haftarot, and Services.

Educational Opportunities:

Access to adult education classes, family programming, teenager and youth programs.

Opportunities to deepen knowledge about Jewish Laws, Ethics, outlooks (Hashkafa), history, culture, and traditions.

Cultural and Social Programs for all ages:

We offer Weekly Children's learning programs for boys, girls, and teenagers. Weekly Father and son program and Hazanut program.

Participation in cultural events and holiday celebrations. Membership usually includes tickets to High Holy Day services (e.g., Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur) with discounted rates.

All Community events including Hanukkah Party, Seudat Purim, Lag Baomer, and Shavuot Lunch & Simchat Torah Lunches are either free or at discounted rates

All Shabbaton meals at discounted rates.

Charitable and Volunteer Initiatives:

Opportunities to participate in tzedakah (charity) and tikkun olam (repairing the world) initiatives.

Use of Synagogue Facilities:

Use of synagogue facilities for religious private events for free.

2025 MEMBERSHIP: \$613 YEARLY (JANUARY to DECEMBER)

CONTACT THE **OFFICE** FOR MONTHLY AUTOPAYMENT OF **\$51**

Bitterness and Kindness

(Rabbi Eli Mansour)

Toward the end of Maggid – the main section of the Haggadah, when we discuss Yesiat Misrayim in fulfillment of the obligation to speak about the miraculous Exodus from Egypt on this night – we cite a Halachic ruling of Rabban Gamliel regarding the obligation of the Seder. Rabban Gamliel stated that one must discuss at the Seder the meaning of the Korban Pesach (paschal sacrifice), the Masa, and the Marror, and if one does not, then he does not fulfill his obligation. At my Seder, when we reach this point, I make sure that everyone who had left the table – such as the women arranging the food in the kitchen – returns to the table, and that this passage is read in both in Hebrew and English, so that it will be clearly understood by all.

One of the questions that arise regarding this section is its sequence. Rabban Gamliel lists the three Misvot which must be discussed in the order of Pesach, Masa and Marror. Seemingly, this order is incorrect; the Marror should be discussed first. After all, the Marror commemorates the bitterness of slavery, whereas the Korban Pesach commemorates the miraculous plague of the firstborn on the night of Yesiat Misrayim, and the Masa commemorates our ancestors' hasty, frantic departure from Egypt. Quite obviously, Beneh Yisrael first experienced the bitterness of slavery, and then the miracle of the plague of the firstborn. The correct order, therefore, should be Marror, Pesach, Masa. Why did Rabban

Gamliel move the Marror to the end of the list?

To answer this question, we need to revisit the meaning and significance of the Marror.

The Gemara instructs that the best option for Marror is "Hasa," which we call Romaine lettuce. Although this lettuce is not particularly bitter, it is the preferred choice because of its name – "Hasa" which alludes to the fact that "Has Ha'Kadosh Baruch Hu Alenu" – Hashem had mercy and compassion upon us.

This seems very strange. If the entire purpose of the Marror is to remind us of the "bitterness," the pain and suffering that our ancestors endured, then why would we associate the Marror with compassion? Hashem's compassion was shown at the time of Yesiat Misrayim, not during the years of bitterness. Why, then, do we want the name of the vegetable used for Marror to allude to Hashem's mercy?

The answer is that, indeed, the "bitterness" of slavery was an expression of Hashem's mercy and compassion.

To understand how, let us consider an analogy to mortgage payments. A person with a mortgage can choose different payment plans. One possibility is to pay small, relatively easy sums each month, for a lengthy period of time. But he could also choose to "tighten his belt," cutting back on other expenses so he can afford to pay more of his debt each month. This way, he is able to get out of debt faster.

For reasons we do not fully understand, Hashem had told Abraham Abinu that his descendants would endure a 400-year period of slavery. However, Hashem saw that Beneh Yisrael would not survive such a lengthy period of exile. Beneh Yisrael were submerged in the impurity

of Egypt, and had they remained there for 400 years, they would have plummeted to the lowest depths, from which they could not recover. Hashem therefore decided to increase the "monthly payments," so-to-speak, by intensifying the workload, so they could leave 190 years early – after just 210 years of slavery. The suffering the people endured during those 210 years amounted to the suffering they were to have experienced over the course of 400 years of bondage.

It turns out, then, that the "bitterness" was a crucial component of the redemption from Egypt. Beneh Yisrael were able to leave Egypt only because they suffered not only exile, but "bitterness," such that 400 years' worth of exile was condensed into 210 years. Had this not happened, they could never have been redeemed.

This easily explains why we eat "Hasa" as our Marror – because the bitterness commemorated by the Marror was indeed a manifestation of Hashem's boundless kindness and compassion for His beloved nation.

With this in mind, we can return to Rabban Gamliel's statement. He listed "Pesach, Masa, Marror" in this sequence because it was only after the "Pesach" and the "Masa" that Beneh Yisrael understood the nature of the "Marror." While they were suffering, everything appeared "bitter." But later, in retrospect, after they left Egypt, they understood that the bitterness of those 210 years allowed them to "pay" their "debt" more quickly, which was critical for their survival as a people. We therefore discuss first the Korban Pesach and Masa, the redemption from Egypt, and then we are in a position to properly understand the Marror, the indispensable role played by the

"bitterness" of slavery in the process of redemption.

This might also be the reason why we dip the Marror in the sweet Haroset – to symbolize the fact that the bitterness of slavery was actually "sweet," as it ensured our ancestors' survival and eventual redemption.

This is something we must remember during our own "bitter" periods, when we face challenges and hardship. At the moment, we see nothing "sweet" or beneficial about the difficult situation that we are experiencing. But we must trust that this "Marror," as "bitter" as it feels, is actually to our benefit. As regarding our ancestors' bondage in Egypt, Hashem is acting kindly toward us even when we endure hardship. This belief helps us remain strong and confident even in life's more challenging moments, as we will trust that everything we are going through is, in truth, to our benefit.

A Night of Gratitude

On the first night of Pesach, we begin the Arvit prayer with the recitation of the 107th chapter of Tehillim. This chapter opens with the exclamation, "Hodu L'Hashem Ki Tob, Ki Le'olam Hasdo" – "Thank G-d, for He is good, for His kindness is eternal."

The selection of this chapter as the introduction to the night of the seder is very significant, because it encapsulates the essence of this night. The seder is what we might call the Jewish "thanksgiving dinner," as it revolves around the theme of gratitude, thanking

Hashem for all He has done for us.

In fact, this chapter of Tehillim proceeds to describe the four situations which require a person to bring a Korban Toda – a thanksgiving sacrifice in the Bet Ha'mikdash, or, nowadays, to recite Birkat Ha'gomel, thanking Hashem for saving him. These four situations are a sea voyage, a trip through the desert, imprisonment, and serious illness. A person who emerges from any of these four perilous situations is required to bring a Korban Toda to express his gratitude to Hashem. Our ancestors experienced all four situations. They were released from bondage, from their "imprisonment" in Egypt, and the Sages teach that when they departed Egypt, all their physical ailments from which they suffered as a result of slavery were cured. They then crossed the sea and the desert. This is one of the reasons given for the obligation to drink four cups of wine at the seder. We drink one cup to express gratitude for each of these dangerous conditions from which our forefathers were rescued. Appropriately, therefore, we begin the Arvit service on this night with the chapter of Tehillim that speaks of the obligation to express gratitude to Hashem for these four forms of redemption, all of which are celebrated on the night of the seder.

The Maharal of Prague (Rav Yehuda Loew, 1512-1609) asserted that this theme of the seder explains why we refer to the text read on this night with the term "Haggadah."

The source of this term, the Maharal writes, is a Misva which has a surprising connection to the seder experience – the Misva of Bikkurim, which requires a farmer to bring the first of his orchard's fruits that ripen to the Bet Ha'mikdash and give them to a

Kohen. When he arrived in the Bet Ha'mikdash, the farmer was to pronounce a special text dictated in the Torah (Debarim 26), a text commonly referred to as "Mikra Bikkurim." In this proclamation, the farmer would briefly recall his ancestors' period of slavery in Egypt, how they cried to Hashem, and how He miraculously brought them to freedom. The four verses of Mikra Bikkurim comprise the text that we use at the seder as the focal point of our discussion of Yesiat Misrayim (the Exodus from Egypt). Rather than go through the entire narrative of the Egyptian bondage and the Exodus, we go through the brief account of Mikra Bikkurim, carefully analyzing each phrase of this short text.

The Maharal notes that the first words the Torah requires the farmer to declare upon arriving in the Bet Ha'mikdash with his fruits are "Higadeti Hayom L'Hashem Elokecha." The Aramaic Targum Yerushalmi translation of the Torah renders this verse as, "I give thanks and praise to Hashem your G-d." It thus turns out that the word "Higadeti," which we would normally translate as "I have told," actually means expressing praise and gratitude. And it is for this reason, the Maharal writes, that we refer to the text of the Pesach seder as the "Haggadah" – because this is the text we use to express our gratitude to Hashem, which is what the seder experience is all about.

In the introduction to the Maggid section of the Haggadah, we announce, "Ve'chol Ha'marbeh Hareh Zeh Meshubah" – the more one speaks about Yesiat Misrayim on this night, the more praiseworthy he is. The Maharal writes that when it comes to expressing gratitude, the more the better. Saying "thank you" to someone who did us a favor

might be enough to discharge our obligation, but we can and should do better than that. When expressing appreciation, we should be detailed and specific, and not hold back. The more gratitude we show, the better.

There is so much negativity and cynicism all around us. There are so many people who criticize and complain about everything, who focus on what's wrong and then constantly talk about it. Let us counter this negativity with positivity, by indulging in gratitude, in appreciation, by regularly praising and being thankful for all the good there is. Of course, we live in an imperfect world, where there is always something to complain about. But we also live in a wonderful world with so much to be grateful for. And this should be our focus.

May the upcoming night of gratitude motivate us to always see and direct our attention toward the goodness all around us and all that is right in our world, so we will live with joy and contentment even as we do our small part to address the world's imperfections in an effort to correct them.

The Two Dippings

(Rabbi Rabbi Joey Habber)

As the child observes during the singing of *מה נשתנה*, there are two points during the *se-der* when we dip some food before eating it. Early in the *se-der*, after *kiddush*, we dip the *karpas* (a piece of vegetable) in saltwater, or vinegar (depending on one's family custom), and later, right before the meal, we dip the *marror* in *haroset*. What

might these two dippings represent?

The *Ben Ish Hai* explained that the two dippings, which are performed before and after the main part of the *se-der*, correspond to two dippings that in essence bookended the period of exile in Egypt. The first dipping commemorates *מכירת יוסף*, Yosef's sale as a slave by his brothers, when they dipped his special garment in goat's blood to make it appear as though he was attacked by a wild animal. As we prepare to tell the story of our ancestors' bondage in Egypt, we bring to mind how it started – with hatred among brothers, with divisiveness, with jealousy, with brothers turning against one another. Then, after we learn about the process of *Yetziat Mitzrayim*, we dip a second time to commemorate the night *Beneh Yisrael* left Egypt. In preparation for this night, they slaughtered a sheep and dipped branches in the blood, which they then smeared on their doorposts. These branches were bound together into a bundle, symbolizing unity, as the people corrected the scourge of hatred and divisiveness that had caused their exile and joined together in peace and harmony.

I also saw an additional explanation of the two dippings.

The first time, we take the *karpas*, a tasty vegetable, and dip it into something foul-tasting. The second time, we do just the opposite – we take the bitter *marror* and dip it into the sweet *haroset*. The *karpas* and the *marror* represent the two different kinds of stages we go through in life. At times, we enjoy "*karpas*" – good fortune, happiness and success. But we all go through phases of "*marror*," of "bitterness." Every

person, without exception, struggles at various points in life. Whether it's devastating loss, financial hardships, problems within the family, or challenges with physical or mental health, we all deal with "*marror*" of one kind or another.

The two dippings instruct us how to handle both the joys and the bitterness.

During times of joy and good fortune, we need to exercise caution not to become too confident or arrogant. We must not become overly self-assured, certain that we will always enjoy unbridled happiness and success. We must remind ourselves that life is fragile, that we are always vulnerable. The dipping of the *karpas* into the saltwater thus represents the tempering of our joy, teaching that while we are certainly entitled to enjoy our good fortune, we must ensure not to see ourselves as invincible, or that our continued success is guaranteed.

But in times of "bitterness," when we are struggling, when life has taken a wrong turn, when we feel pain, sorrow or anxiety, we need to do the opposite – we need to "dip" these feelings into the "*haroset*," and make them "sweeter." We must believe that Hashem is always helping us, and even the direst, most painful situation can be reversed. Instead of wallowing in sadness and self-pity, we need to "sweeten" our feelings through *emunah*, by reminding ourselves that Hashem is in control.

The message of the two dippings, then, is we must never get too high or too low. Both in times of joy and in times of struggle, we need to place our faith in Hashem, and trust that He is

managing our lives, and that we can and must always rely only on Him.

Pesah Matza

Maror

(Samy Maya)

We read in the Haggadah that Rabban Gamliel says that whoever doesn't say these three things has not fulfilled his obligation: Pesah, Matza, and Maror.

This hints to us that saying these three words are keneged and a representation of the entire Haggadah. How is this so? How is it that saying three words fulfills the entirety of our obligation on the unique night of Pesah?

The Haggadah explains each of these things individually and how each one tells part of the story of the Exodus of Egypt. But maybe, there is a greater message behind the three words as we put them together. The sages teach us that one of the main objectives of the Haggadah is to begin the Haggadah speaking about our humble origins and make our way up to becoming Hashem's people. It is upon us to understand why we had to go into exile in Egypt... this is part of our humble origins. But it is also upon us to understand how we are to elevate ourselves out of Egypt and becoming the kadosh nation Hashem intended for us to be.

Pesah, Matza, and Maror are the words that help us understand both our humble origins and our rise to greatness.

Pesah, פסח, our sages teach us is comprised of two words, פה no, the mouth that speaks. Matza, מצה, doesn't only translate as the bread we eat during this holiday, but it also translates as *to find*. Maror represents the bitterness we endured during exile.

The cause of our exile begins with the Lashon HaRa that Yosef and his brothers spoke against one another. Yosef would bring negative reports about them, and they couldn't understand Yosef's deep connection to their father. Because of the negative speech, we were exiled to Egypt. It turns out that the *mouth that spoke* (פסח) *found* (מצה) *bitterness* (מרור)! Rabban Gamliel is hinting to us with three words our humble origins and the cause of our exile.

But there is a positive hint hidden in these words as well. the Netivot Ha-Mishpat teaches us an incredible idea. Why are these three terms out of order? The bitterness and Maror should be before Pesah and Matza which only came during the salvation. The reason we celebrate Pesah is because we became Hashem's people. What happened before that is not so important. If we were slaves or doing anything else, it doesn't matter because we became Hashem's nation. If Maror would be first, then it would seem that the primary reason we celebrate Pesah is because we were saved from the bitter place. We were bitter and then saved. But that is not the primary reason. The primary reason was to become Hashem's nation, leaving the bitterness was a side-effect.

Based on this we could understand the positive message of the order of the three words and how the words signify our rise to greatness from that previous lowly state. Pesah, as we said, translates as the mouth that *speaks*. How do we undo the mouth that spoke negativity? The Haggadah says, whoever *speaks* a lot about the Exodus, he is the one that is praiseworthy! By using our mouths to *speak* about the greatness of Hashem and give our gratitude, we

begin to undo the initial mouth that spoke evil.

Matza represents our being *found* and us *finding* Hashem. It represents, as Netivot Ha-Mishpat said, the reason of our salvation.

Lastly, comes the Maror. When we truly begin to use our Pesah, our mouths that speak, to speak about Hashem and praise Him, that is when we will find Hashem and become close to Him! And if any Maror comes our way... it will be easy to survive it because of our closeness to Hashem. We wouldn't view the Maror as anything bitter, but as a challenge from Hashem to help us become better and rise to true greatness!

Put together, the three words hint to us two opposing ideas that encompass the essence of the Haggadah. This is why Rabban Gamliel said that we whoever doesn't say these words does not complete his obligation! The words signify how we got to such a lowly state to begin with, but the very same words also hint to us our rise to greatness with Hashem's help. This is what the Haggadah is all about... recognizing, praising, and thanking Hashem for raising us to greatness when all seemed lost. Beezrat Hashem, we will merit to see the ultimate Pesah, Matza, and Maror and the Jewish people are truly raised to even greater heights than ever before!

The Seder

Within the Seder: Karpas and Yahatz

Our sages teach us that it is important and critical that we not just commence reading the Haggadah, but before we start, we

must sing the ever-important Table of Contents!

HaRav Bakshi Doron writes in his Haggadah that we are not just reading the table of contents of what we will do on this night. Rather, contained in these words are the order of spiritual tasks by which a Jew must abide. We come into the Seder after leaving Egypt, מצרים. Why and how does anybody end up in Misrayim? Why did we suffer so much in Misrayim?

The cause and solution are in the Seder! The word מצרים comes from the root word צר, narrow, and צרה, suffering. We were in a place called Misrayim because we were *narrow minded*. We only chose to see what was in front of us... we did not look at the bigger picture. We did not view our experience in Egypt as something that was good for us and that Hashem was behind it all. If we would have looked at the bigger picture... *or at least trusted in Hashem that there is a bigger picture*, we would never have had that צרה and suffered like we did... we would have taken it happily knowing it is for our best! *We suffered in Misrayim because we did not sing the table of contents...* we had a hard time believing that there is an order to everything that happens! The way out of Misrayim... the way out of the narrow-mindedness... the way out of the suffering is by declaring that nothing is random and that there is an order. The way out of our suffering is singing the *order of contents*!

But besides there being an order to the Table of Contents, there is an order within the order in each of the 15 steps of the Haggadah. There is something to learn from the placement of each step. We'll look at karpas and yahatz.

We dip the karpas in salt water before eating it. The next step, yahatz, is when we take the

middle of the 3 *masot* and split it into two. We do this to remind ourselves of the poorness of Egypt. We don't eat a full bread, but only a broken bread. The bigger piece we save for Afikomen and the smaller piece we put back between the other two. Some break the matzah in a cloth bag to remind ourselves that we left with nothing but a small bag filled with matzah.

The Alshich writes that the word כרפס is an acronym for the words כף רש פת סמך, *hand, poor, bread, support*. We are to give into the *hands of the poor bread* in order to *support* him. This is great when we are wealthy enough to support the poor, but there are times where we cannot afford to give enough to support the poor person. In this case, there still is something we could give the poor. If we cannot give the poor person karpas, i.e. food or money, then we give him the next step in the Haggadah, יחץ. Yahatz, in regards to the Seder, is translated as 'splitting', as in splitting the matzah. But yahatz could also be translated as *advice*. If you cannot give money to those that need it, then give your words... give good *advice* and/or say nice things to people.

This idea ties back into our Seder and the order. First there is Kadesh, Hashem 'sanctified' us, then we were 'washed', and now we eat the karpas. It reminds us that Hashem was there *supporting* us in our poorness all the time.

Karpas coupled with yahatz teaches us the greater lesson of the two-fold charity Hashem gave us. Not only did Hashem support us (karpas), but He gave us good advice (yahatz). But what was the advice?

The advice was the how to get out of Egypt! The way out of Egypt was by realizing there is an order and that order is run by

Hashem! Our way out of Egypt was and is the recognition and emuna that Hashem is the One in charge, so trust in Him! The more we trust in Him, the more we bring Him into our lives. The more He is in our lives, the faster we'll get out of exile, just like we did in Egypt.

Yahatz also represents giving to the poor, but poor in a different sense. It the *advice* Hashem gave His poor people. From time to time there will be karpas and salty bitter water that we would have to live through and have lived through, but it is not a problem! We may have to dip our vegetables in salty water... but don't worry... Hashem has already given us the remedy... yahatz! Hashem has already given us the advice of how to get out of those bitter waters... how to get out of Misrayim! In order to get out of the sorrows of Misrayim, we have to first get ourselves out of the narrow-mindedness that keeps us in Misrayim! *Understand and trust that there is a much greater seder that we don't always understand*. There is a Seder for everything that happens. There are Seders even within the Seder to remind us of this!

Pesah Sameach!

Food for Thought

6 Pesach

Lessons to Impart to Your Children

(By Debbie Gutfreund @Aish.com)

A letter to my children for the Seder.

Tonight I want to tell you a story. It's a story that began in a narrow, dark land where we knew our names but forgot who we were. It's a story of how we lost our way and fell until we reached a place where we could no longer speak. A place where we couldn't stay where we were but didn't yet know how to leave.

It's a story about last minute hope. About a faith that pulled us forward and helped us take that first step towards freedom. It's a story about how G-d picked us up and brought us from despair to joy, from darkness to light, from chaos to meaning. It's a story of the journey of our nation. It's the story of your great grandparents. It's my story. It's your story.

Our stories don't end. They are passed from generation to generation, and each of us adds our own story. Of hope, of redemption, of learning how to grow beyond yesterday's narrow space. Here are some of the lessons from the Passover story that I want you to know.

1. Learn how to ask. Most great achievements in life begin with a question. Be curious. Speak up. Ask! Ask me about the salt water and the parsley. About the matzah and the pillows on our chairs. Ask about the Seder plate with the bitter herbs that bring tears to my eyes. All of this is here because I want you to ask me why.

2. Responsibility for each other. We invite all who are hungry to come and eat because we are responsible for one another. Some people are hungry for food, while others are hungry for wisdom. Whatever we have we should share as much as we can.

3. Embrace challenges. On our table is salt water which represents our tears. And there are bitter herbs that we will eat to remember the suffering we endured. We speak of our

challenges and remember our tears because we can see now how they transformed us, how they moved us, how they taught us how to yearn for freedom. Embrace challenges. Learn from them. Remember them. They brought us to this place today.

4. Take action. Thinking and preparing for change are important steps but what matters in the end is following through with our actions. Matzah teaches us the importance of acting quickly when we know something is the right thing to do. We didn't wait for the bread to rise. Instead, we grabbed the matzah and ran. Take action whenever you can and as soon as you can. The world is full of great ideas that have never been realized. Matzah teaches us to move, to do, to run towards our goal.

5. Practice Jewish gratitude. Tonight, we sing Dayenu. It would have been enough for us if all we did was wake up this morning, but You gave us water. And that would have been enough but in Your great kindness You gave us food, and sight and hearing and legs and hands. This is the kind of gratitude that teaches us during the hardest of days that we have so much to be thankful for. That all of life is an undeserved, precious gift.

6. The meaning of freedom. Some people think freedom means being able to do what we want whenever we want to. But the Jewish definition of freedom is the ability to create a meaningful life with authentic values and to create a close connection with our Creator. Freedom is living a life of constant growth and striving to live up to our potential.

As we gather around the Seder table, take this story that has been passed from generation to generation and make it your own.

Each of you is a precious treasure for the Jewish people.

This Passover night, I want to tell you a story that because of you, our children, will never end.

Daily Halacha

Halachot of Karpas

The "Ke'ara" is the plate which we keep on the table throughout the Seder, and it contains all the special foods eaten at the Seder. One should ensure that the plate contains all the foods throughout the Seder. Meaning, after one partakes of the Karpas, for example, he should keep some leftover Karpas on the Ke'ara. Even though one has already passed that stage of the Seder, it is important that the Ke'ara has on it all the foods, even the Karpas.

The salt water, into which one dips the Karpas, does not have to be on the Ke'ara.

The custom in our community is to eat specifically celery, which is the food denoted by the word "Karpas." This is the custom that one should follow, as the word "Karpas" alludes to the "Perech Samech" – the backbreaking labor endured by the 600,000 Israelite men in Egypt. Furthermore, Rav Haim Vital (1543-1620) taught that the according to Kabbalah, the numerical value of the word "Karpas" (360) is very significant and alludes to different Names of the Almighty.

Before eating the Karpas, we wash our hands the way we do

before eating bread. That is, we pour water three times on the right hand and then three times on the left hand. The only difference is that no Beracha is recited upon this washing. It should be noted that the requirement to wash before Karpas relates to a general Halacha that is not connected specifically to Pesah. All year round, before one eats a fruit or vegetable that is moistened with a liquid, he must first wash his hands, without a Beracha. For example, people generally wash grapes and apples before eating them. Assuming the fruit is still wet when one eats it, he must first perform Netilat Yadayim, without a Beracha, before eating. We therefore wash our hands before eating the Karpas which is dipped in salt water. The Kaf Ha'haim laments the fact that most people are unaware of this Halacha, and they wash Netilat Yadayim before Karpas but not before eating wet foods other times during the year.

We dip the Karpas in salt water in order to do something unusual that will arouse the children's curiosity at the Seder. Normally, at that point in the meal we eat bread. When they see that we instead dip celery in salt water, they will find this unusual and ask questions. There are also many Kabbalistic concepts underlying the dipping of Karpas, so one must ensure to properly observe this and all customs at the Seder in accordance with tradition.

Several works mention the importance of saying or singing the names of the various stages of the Seder (Kadesh, U'rhatz, Karpas, Yahatz, etc.). Before one begins each stage, he should say or sing all the stages starting from Kadesh, and then stop upon reaching the current stage. Before Karpas, for example, one would recite, "Kadesh, U'rhatz, Karpas." The Ben Ish

Hai (Rav Yosef Haim of Baghdad, 1833-1909) expounded upon the Kabbalistic significance of each of these words. One must not belittle or neglect these or other traditional customs, as they are all based upon profound, underlying meaning and wisdom.

Summary:

One washes Netilat Yadayim without a Beracha before Karpas and anytime he prepares to eat a food that is wet. One should use specifically celery for Karpas. After eating the Karpas, one should still make sure that some Karpas remains on the Seder plate. It is proper before each stage of the Seder to state all the stages from Kadesh until the current stage.

Drinking After the Afikoman

(Daily Halacha)

The Afikoman must be eaten with Heseba – meaning, while leaning on the left side. The Sages forbade eating after the Afikoman so that the taste of the Afikoman will remain in one's mouth for the duration of the night. Therefore, after one finishes eating the Afikoman, he may not eat anything else and should immediately recite Birkat Ha'mazon.

Furthermore, one may not drink anything after eating the Afikoman besides the final two cups of wine. It is permissible, however, to drink water after the Afikoman, including carbonated water, and the Halachic authorities rule that one may also drink tea or coffee. The Ben Ish Hai (Rav Yosef Haim of Baghdad, 1833-1909), in Od Yosef Hai, writes that if one needs to add some sugar to the

tea or coffee in order to be able to drink it, he may do so. Hacham Abraham Antebe (Aleppo, 1765-1858) was likewise lenient in this regard, and this was also the practice among the Jewish communities in Egypt, as documented in the work *Nehar Misrayim*. This ruling is mentioned by the Hid"ah (Rav Haim Yosef David Azulai, 1724-1806), as well, and this is the position of Hacham Ovadia Yosef. Hacham Bension Abba Shaul (Israel, 1923-1998) recommends drinking the tea or coffee without sugar, but he rules that one may add sugar if necessary. (This is also the Halacha regarding drinking before Shaharit in the morning; one may drink tea or coffee, and he may add sugar if he needs.)

Other beverages, however, may not be drunk after eating the Afikoman.

In the "Ha'rahaman" section of Birkat Ha'mazon, we add the special "Ha'rahaman" for Yom Tob ("Hu Yanhilenu Le'yom She'kulo Tob"). It should be noted that the custom in Halab (Aleppo), as documented in the work *Derech Eretz*, was not to add special "Ha'rahaman" prayers on Shabbat or Yom Tob, and to recite only the standard prayers that are included in the regular weekday Birkat Ha'mazon. Clearly, however, our community has since adopted the widespread custom to add the special "Ha'rahaman" prayers for Shabbat and Yom Tob.

Immediately after Birkat Ha'mazon, one drinks the third cup of wine while leaning on his left side. One who drank without leaning must drink another cup of wine.

After drinking the third cup, some have the custom to pour a special cup in honor of Eliyahu Ha'nabi and to leave it on the

table throughout the remainder of the Seder. The Rama (Rav Moshe Isserles of Cracow, 1525-1572) cites a custom among Ashkenazim to then open the door as an expression of faith that Hashem will protect us on this special night, in the hope that Mashiah will come in the merit of our faith. As Eliyahu will come to herald our redemption, a special cup is poured in his honor. However, although this is the custom in many communities, the custom among Syrian Jews is to neither pour this cup for Eliyahu nor open the door.

The Hallel is then recited, slowly and with festive song. The Shulhan Aruch writes that it is preferable to arrange for a Zimun (three or more men) to be present at the Seder so that the Hallel can be recited responsively, as it was in ancient times, when one person would recite "Hodu L'Hashem Ki Tob," and the others would respond, "Ki Le'olam Hasdo." Nevertheless, if a Zimun is not present, the Hallel may still be recited.

The custom among Syrian Jews is to recite the regular full Hallel, followed by the chapter of Tehillim (136) "Hodu' Le'Hashem" ("Hallel Ha'gadol"), "Nishmat," "Yishtabah" (until just before the end), and then the Beracha of "Yehalelucha." The Tur (Rabbenu Yaakov Ben Asher, Germany-Spain, 1226-1343) ruled that "Yehalelucha" should be recited immediately after the standard chapters of Hallel, but our custom follows the view of the Bet Yosef (commentary to the Tur by Maran, author of the Shulhan Aruch) to recite "Yehalelucha" at the very end.

After reciting the concluding Beracha of "Melech Mehulal Ba'tishbahot," we drink the fourth cup of wine, without first reciting "Boreh Peri Ha'gefen." One must drink a Rebi'it and then recite the Beracha Aharana. Some people

do not drink the fourth cup until the very end of the Seder, after singing the traditional songs, but this is improper; the fourth cup should be drunk upon the conclusion of Hallel. The Shulhan Aruch writes that if one forgot to lean while drinking the fourth cup of wine, and he must therefore drink another cup, he recites a new Beracha of "Boreh Peri Ha'gefen," as this cup was not covered by the Beracha recited earlier. However, Hacham Ovadia Yosef (Hazon Ovadia – Teshubot, Siman 49) clarifies that this applies only if one realized his mistake after drinking the entire cup of wine. If some of the wine was left in the cup, then he adds some wine and drinks a new cup while leaning without first reciting a new Beracha.

Kid's Corner

Karpas: We Are Princes!

While observing the part of the seder involving *karpas*, one may wonder if there is a contradiction. On one hand, we remember the Jews' suffering and the many tears they shed. However, on the other hand, dipping is an act traditionally associated with royalty. How can these two seemingly opposing elements be reconciled?

Rabbi Nosson Muller, in his Hagadah, shares a remarkable story told by Rabbi Yaakov Galinsky from his time in Siberia, which might shed light on the seeming contradiction of karpas.

During his time in Siberia, Rabbi Yaakov was forced to do back-breaking labor under terrible conditions. One of his barrack-mates stood out to him as peculiar. Every night, before going to sleep, Rabbi Yaakov observed this man slip something into his pocket, walk over to a tiny closet off to the side, and disappear inside. A few minutes later, he would return, often with a smile on his face.

After months of watching his barrack-mate's mysterious nightly ritual, Rabbi Yaakov mustered the courage to ask, "What's your secret? I promise I won't tell anyone."

His bunkmate looked Rabbi Yaakov squarely in the eye and replied, "When I was taken captive by the enemy, they stripped me of everything—my belongings, my family heirlooms, even my identity. I was left with nothing. But there was one thing I managed to keep... my badge of honor."

Rabbi Yaakov was confused. "Your badge of honor? What do you mean?"

"This badge symbolized my prestigious rank in my nation's army," the man continued, his voice steady but filled with emotion. "Every night, after a long day of suffering, I take out my badge, place it on my chest, and stare at my reflection through a broken piece of mirror. In those moments, I remember who I am. And that is something an enemy could never take from me."

A person who is a *ben melech*—a son of a king—can understand how one could feel both broken and hurt, yet simultaneously be on top of the world. A prince, no matter the circumstances, will always act with dignity. This is the lesson of *karpas*. Yes, there are tears, but we remain firm in our loyalty. We are princes, in the

greatest place — *the presence of Hashem!*

No matter where life takes us, it is crucial to remember that we are all *bnei melachim*, children of Hashem. With that pride, we can endure any challenge, because the feeling of being a child of Hashem—something no one can ever take from us—becomes our ultimate strength. No matter what hardships we face, this connection to Hashem and our royal heritage will always stand firm. No one can take that away from us.

La Paracha En Français

A

Accomplir les mitsvot avec feu

(Extrait du livre: Dans La salle du Tresor)]

« Ordonne à Aaron et à ses fils ce qui suit : ceci est la règle de l'holocauste. » (Vayikra 6, 2)

Rachi commente : « Le mot tsav (ordonne) implique toujours une idée de zèle, pour le présent et pour les générations à venir. Rabbi Chimon bar Yo'haï a enseigné : "Le texte incite à d'autant plus de zèle qu'il y a risque de perte d'argent." »

Comme nous le savons, les Cohanim gagnaient un certain intérêt de chaque sacrifice, puisqu'ils recevaient une partie de sa viande. L'holocauste, entièrement brûlé, faisait exception ; seule la peau de l'animal était donnée aux prêtres. La Torah craignait qu'en conséquence, ils ne l'apportent pas assez rapidement, c'est pourquoi elle les a

pressés particulièrement concernant ce sacrifice.

Bien-entendu, ceci constitue une leçon pour toutes les générations à venir, y compris pour la nôtre, privée de Temple. Il nous incombe d'accomplir la volonté divine avec zèle, même lorsqu'il s'agit de mitsvot impliquant une perte d'argent et desquelles on ne retire aucun intérêt personnel, comme l'achat d'une paire de téfilin ou d'un étrog de grande qualité. De même, nous devons veiller à ne pas nous laisser influencer par notre mauvais penchant, qui nous incite à nous contenter de notre strict devoir pour ce qui est de la charité et de la bienfaisance. Au contraire, nous surmonterons ses assauts et nous empresserons de donner de la tsédaka avec générosité et joie.

Une deuxième leçon peut être déduite de l'holocauste, entièrement consumé pour l'Eternel : l'ensemble de nos actes doivent Lui être voués. Lorsque nous mangeons, buvons, dormons ou satisfaisons nos autres besoins physiques, nous aurons l'intention, non pas d'en éprouver une jouissance personnelle, mais d'en retirer les forces et la santé nécessaires pour poursuivre notre service divin avec un entraînement redoublé. Dès lors, nos actes physiques acquerront une dimension spirituelle et désintéressée.

Le 'Hafets 'Haïm avait l'habitude de voyager de village en village pour vendre ses livres. Une fois, il se trouvait dans une auberge à Vilna, quand il vit un Juif grossier, qui, s'étant attablé, avait demandé à la serveuse de lui apporter immédiatement un morceau d'oie rôtie et un verre d'alcool. Avec gloutonnerie, il se jeta sur son plat et le savoura, sans avoir récité de bénédiction. Puis, il but bruyamment une gorgée de sa boisson. Le 'Hafets 'Haïm, choqué, observait ce

spectacle silencieusement. Il ne pouvait s'empêcher de s'approcher de cet homme pour le réprimander de sa conduite.

Mais, l'aubergiste l'arrêta, lui expliquant qu'il s'agissait d'un Juif ignorant n'ayant jamais étudié, car, à l'âge de sept ans, il avait été enlevé de ses parents avec d'autres enfants et envoyé en Sibérie. Jusqu'à dix-huit ans, il avait grandi avec les paysans de ce pays, puis il avait été enrôlé dans l'armée du Tsar Nicolas pendant vingt-cinq ans. Il n'était donc pas étonnant qu'il se comporte ainsi. Aussi, n'y avait-il aucun sens à essayer de le réprimander, car des remontrances tomberaient sans doute dans l'oreille d'un sourd.

Toutefois, le 'Hafets 'Haïm ne se laissa pas dissuader. Il voulait essayer de lui parler, convaincu qu'il parviendrait à se frayer le chemin de son cœur. Il s'approcha de lui et lui tendit la main pour le saluer cordialement. Ensuite, sur un ton amical et chaleureux, il lui dit : « J'ai entendu que tu as été enlevé alors que tu étais un jeune enfant pour être emmené en Sibérie. Tu as grandi parmi des non-juifs et n'as pas eu le mérite d'apprendre, serait-ce une lettre de la Torah. Tu as dû vivre la géhenne dans ce monde, après toutes les tentatives de ces impies de te faire renoncer à ta religion et de te contraindre à manger des aliments interdits ! Malgré cela, tu as eu le courage de rester Juif. J'aimerais bien avoir les mêmes mérites et la même place que toi dans le monde futur. Sache qu'un endroit très élevé t'y est réservé ; tu seras dans la proximité des plus grands justes. Ce n'est pas une petite chose que d'endurer de telles souffrances pour le judaïsme et l'honneur divin durant des dizaines d'années consécutives. C'est une épreuve encore plus grande que celle de 'Hanania, Michaël et Azaria. »

Des larmes apparurent dans les yeux de l'ancien soldat. Il fut profondément touché par ce discours authentique, chaleureux et sincère, qui fit littéralement revivre son âme abattue. Lorsqu'il apprit l'identité de son interlocuteur, il éclata en sanglots et se mit à embrasser les mains du Tsadik.

Le 'Hafets 'Haïm poursuivit : « Si un homme de ton rang, qui a eu le mérite de compter parmi les saints sacrifiant leur vie pour sanctifier le Nom divin, s'engage dorénavant à vivre le restant de ses jours comme un Juif observant, il sera l'homme le plus heureux sur terre ! » Et effectivement, il ne quitta pas le 'Hafets 'Haïm avant de devenir un véritable repenti et un juste parfait.

Cette histoire édifiante démontre qu'une étincelle pure réside dans le cœur de tout Juif. Même s'il est très éloigné de la Torah et des mitzvot, son âme demeure liée par des cordes d'amour à la sainteté qui prévalait au mont Sinaï, restée profondément ancrée en lui. Dès l'instant où on éveille en lui sa fibre de Torah et insuffle en son être un souffle de vie, cette étincelle se ravive et se transforme en une grande flamme.

Reflexion Semanal

La ventaja del Baal

Teshuvá

(Por Rabbi Yonatan Gefen)

En su discusión sobre las diversas ofrendas, la Torá describe las ofrendas de culpa (Asham) y pecado (Jatat) con el exaltado

término de "santísimo" (Kodesh Kedoshim). En contraste, las ofrendas de paz (Shelamim) son descritas como "ofrendas santas menores" (Kodshim Kalim), lo que indica un nivel inferior de santidad. Abarbanel(1) pregunta: ¿por qué el Asham y el Jatat merecen un título más elevado que el aparentemente igual de sagrado Shelamim?

Él responde que las ofrendas Asham y Jatat son llevadas por personas que han pecado y buscan expiación. Se trata de personas que han regresado a D-os (Baalei Teshuvá), y por ello sus ofrendas son especialmente queridas para Él. En contraste, la ofrenda Shelamim es llevada por personas justas que no han pecado, por eso se encuentra en un nivel inferior. Esta idea está expresada en el Talmud, que enseña que un justo perfecto (Tzadik Gamur) no puede estar en el mismo lugar que un Baal Teshuvá.(2) Por lo tanto, de acuerdo con Abarbanel, las ofrendas de un Baal Teshuvá alcanzan un grado de santidad más alto que las de un justo perfecto y merecen ser llamadas Kodesh Kedoshim.

¿Por qué un Baal Teshuvá es considerado en un nivel más alto que una persona justa? La respuesta simple es que debe superar su inclinación negativa mucho más que una persona justa, y por eso merece más mérito, conforme a la idea de "Lefum Tzaara Agra" — "según el esfuerzo, es la recompensa".

El Pri Megadim(3) ofrece otra explicación interesante. La Guemará(4) dice que cuando una persona hace teshuvá por amor, sus pecados pasados se transforman en mitzvot. Esto significa que todas sus acciones pasadas, ya sean mitzvot o pecados, se convierten en mitzvot. Esto puede entenderse de la siguiente manera: la conciencia de sus pecados le da al Baal

Teshuvá una motivación extra para triunfar en el futuro y un profundo odio hacia el pecado, ya que ha experimentado de primera mano el daño que causa. Un justo perfecto no tiene estos beneficios; todas sus acciones pasadas son mitzvot, pero no tiene pecados que puedan convertirse en méritos ni la misma aversión al pecado, ya que nunca ha caído en él.

Rav Yojanán Zweig(5) ofrece una diferencia adicional entre el Baal Teshuvá y la persona completamente justa, con una explicación novedosa para responder dos preguntas del Raavad sobre el Rambam en Hiljot Avodá Zará.(6) El Rambam describe cómo, en la época en que nació Abraham, la idolatría era rampante. Casi todo el mundo era politeísta, excepto Shem, Éver y sus discípulos. Abraham comenzó a cuestionar este sistema de creencias y concluyó que debía haber un solo Creador todopoderoso y bueno. El Rambam afirma que Abraham alcanzó este reconocimiento a los 40 años, y desde entonces promovió activamente el mono-teísmo ético, logrando que muchas personas cambiaran.

El Ra'avad plantea dos objeciones al relato del Rambam. En primer lugar, cita otra enseñanza de Jazal aparentemente opuesta que sostiene que Abraham reconoció a su Creador a los 3 años. La Guemará(7) deriva esto a partir del valor numérico de la palabra Ekev (172) en la frase Ekev asher shamá Abraham bekoli(8) ("Porque Abraham escuchó Mi voz"). Los Sabios dicen que Abraham fue fiel a la Palabra de D-os durante 172 de sus 175 años de vida, es decir, desde que tenía 3 años. En segundo lugar, el Raavad señala que la descripción del Rambam parece ignorar la presencia de Shem y Éver, quienes eran mayores que Abraham

y enseñaban Torá en sus ieshivot. Entonces, ¿por qué, según el Rambam, sólo Abraham tuvo éxito en cambiar la perspectiva teológica del mundo?(9)

Rav Zweig responde a estas preguntas con la analogía de alguien que quiere convencer a otra persona de que deje de fumar. Si él mismo nunca ha fumado, el fumador probablemente lo ignorará. Puede presentar los argumentos más elocuentes y gráficos sobre por qué el fumador debería dejar el hábito, pero como no conoce el "placer" de inhalar un cigarrillo, es probable que el fumador no se convenza de que realmente comprende los desafíos que implica abandonar un hábito tan adictivo. En cambio, una persona que ha sido fumadora toda su vida y logró superar su adicción a la nicotina tendrá mucho más éxito en persuadir a un fumador de que vale la pena hacer el esfuerzo para "dejar el hábito".

Del mismo modo que un exfumador es más eficaz a la hora de convencer a otro fumador para que deje de fumar, un ex idólatra será mucho más efectivo que alguien que nunca ha adorado ídolos a la hora de crear una nueva religión y lograr que otros idólatras abandonen sus creencias erróneas y acepten la idea del monoteísmo. De manera similar, un Baal Teshuvá suele tener más éxito en ayudar a otra persona a ver la "Luz" que alguien que ha sido "religioso desde su nacimiento". Como lo expresa Rav Isasjar Frand:

"A alguien que nació en un hogar observante, una persona secular puede decirle: '¿Qué sabes tú? Nunca has experimentado los placeres de comer mariscos, nunca has disfrutado de los placeres de la vida. ¿Cómo puedes hablar de una vida de satisfacción y felicidad?' Pero estará más dispuesto a escuchar a alguien que ha estado en ese

mundo y puede decir con convicción: 'Esta vida es mucho mejor'".

Shem y Éver nunca probaron la idolatría, mientras que Abraham sí. Él tomó sus primeros 40 años de error y los transformó en una experiencia positiva que le permitió relacionarse con otras personas y mostrarles la verdad.

Esto también responde a la contradicción respecto a la edad en la que Abraham encontró a D-os. Es cierto que sólo reconoció al Creador a los 40 años, pero dado que transformó toda su experiencia de vida para tener un impacto espiritual positivo en los demás, puede decirse con veracidad que durante 172 años de su vida "escuchó las palabras de su Creador". Retroactivamente, desde los 40 años, convirtió todas sus experiencias de vida, desde el momento en que adquirió inteligencia, a los 3 años, en una experiencia espiritualmente positiva. Se considera como si hubiera encontrado a D-os a los 3 años, porque retroactivamente usó los años entre los 3 y los 40 para ayudar a convencer a otros de la falsedad de la idolatría, basándose en su propia experiencia de fracaso.

Estas ideas son aplicables a todas las personas hoy en día, incluso a alguien que nació en una familia observante. Esto se debe a que el Baal Teshuvá descrito por los Sabios es cualquiera que alguna vez haya pecado y luego haya hecho teshuvá, mientras que la persona perfectamente justa no ha pecado nunca en absoluto. En esta generación todos entran en la categoría de Baal Teshuvá, por lo que pueden utilizar las áreas en las que han tropezado de manera positiva. Esto puede servir como motivación para evitar futuros pecados y usar sus experiencias para ayudar a otros. Que todos tengamos el

mérito de utilizar nuestro pasado para bien.

Nahalot

Nahala of Rabbi Meir Abihssira זצ"ל the 17th of Nisan

On the occasion of the yahrzeit (anniversary of death) of our teacher Rabbi Meir Abihssira, the Torah-Box team is pleased to share some brief details on his life's journey. Whoever speaks about the tzaddik on the day of his yahrzeit, merits the latter's prayers on his behalf! Light a candle and say "*Lichvod Rabbi Meir, Zechuto Yagen Aleinu*", then pray. May his merit protect all of Klal Israel, Amen!

The famous Rabbi Meir Abihssira, nicknamed Baba Meir, was born in Tafilalet in Morocco in 1917 (5677), to his father, Rabbi Israel Abihssira - Baba Saleh, and his mother Frecha.

At the age of 25, he was rabbinically ordained and appointed President of the Rabbinical Court of Midalet and director of Yeshivat Tomchei Temimim in the city.

In 1951 (5711), he replaced his father as head of the Rabbinical Court of Erfoud.

In 1965 (5725) he traveled to the Holy Land and settled in Ashdod. Many visitors flocked to his home to ask for blessings and were saved by his prayers. His court was one of the largest and most visited in the entire country.

In 1973 (5733), at the request of his students and admirers, he began to "rescue the souls of young children" by encouraging parents to enroll them in Chabad schools and kindergartens. At the time, the Israelite Alliance was taking over the education of Jewish children of Morocco.

He left this world on Chol Hamoed Pesach 1983 (5743) when he was barely 66.

He was known as the Greatest and Most Holy One. He could see from one end of the world to the other, thanks to his meticulous Shemirat Enayim (guarding his eyes against staring at improper sights). In addition, he is recognized as a worldly scholar in all dimensions of Chassidut.

It is for this child that I prayed ... (Story told by his son, Rabbi Yekutiel)

For nearly 14 years, his father, Baba Saleh had no offspring. When the couple was finally expecting a child, his reputed master Rabbi Moshe Tordjman noticed that he was worried and asked his student:

"What's bothering you? "

The tzaddik replied that he feared his wife would miscarry, as had been the case several times before. Immediately, his master reassured him:

"Do not worry, this child will live and spread the Torah around the world. "

As the birth of the child approached, a great Tzaddik came to Baba Saleh in a dream and conveyed that the child would be a Great Scholar in Israel. So, he decided to name his son after the name of the Tzaddik that appeared in his dream, yet, he did not know his name.

So, Baba Saleh addressed his master for a solution, and Rabbi Moshe Tordjman said to him:

"It's a certain Rabbi Meir, so we'll name the child Meir, and later he'll be called Baba Meir. "

When he visited Israel for the first time, his family members, upon his return to Morocco, asked him about the Rabbanim in the Holy Land... He answered all were great Tzaddikim, wise and learned men of truth, endowed with superior intelligence, but that there was none other like his son, Rabbi Meir.

He displayed serenity with his children

Once, when Rabbi Meir returned home for the Pesach Seder. Everything was ready and the entire family waited for the Rav to begin. Suddenly, one of his little daughters began to cry. The Rav took her to a room to calm her down unsuccessfully. Only after remaining with her for over an hour and a half until he calmed her down did the Rav return with her to begin the Seder.

Guarding his eyes

Once, Baba Meir drove to the airport to fetch his father, Baba Saleh, who was returning to Israel from abroad. He did not check the notice boards, yet he knew the flight was late. Naturally, the Rav guarded his eyes. But even after years of practice, he surrounded himself with students as often as possible to continue to improve and avoid swaying in this area. By protecting his eyes, he had developed a gift of vision that reached unlimitedly to the end of the earth. Once, he was consulted on an issue about a little Jewish girl who had been abducted by non-Jews: He described her whereabouts to the letter and indicated the exact place where the child was being kept.

Tikkun Chatzot

One of Baba Meir's sons, Rabbi Elazar Abihssira zatzal, once said that his father was very

scrupulous about reading the Tikkun Chatzot and did so with ashes on his forehead. When he was compelled to travel, his wife provided a bag of ash specially designed for the purpose. The Rav stuck it in his clothes pockets like a wallet. When he needed to use the lavatory, he removed it from his pocket, explaining that it symbolized the destruction of the Beit Hamikdash and that therefore it was necessary to treat it with similar sanctity. He added that, unlike in previous generations, he was awarded the right to take a CCTV camera with him, so he could keep an eye on the ash bag even when he was temporarily away from it.

Immense Fear of Heaven

On all his visits to Israel, the Rav visited the Kotel just once, baffled by his fear of the wall's sanctity. He prepared for two entire days to glance at it from a distance. Upon reaching the Kotel, his faced exuded unnamed fear of Heaven.

During his entire life, the Rav aspired to witness the Final Redemption and spoke on this exclusively during his last days. And indeed, almost supernaturally, he left this world on the month of Nissan, the month of Redemption ...

Baba Meir, may his merit protects us, left this world on the fifth day of Passover, the 17th of Nissan 5743 (1983). His grave is located on the Mount of Olives, aside from his master, the Or Hachaim Hakadosh.

Bibhilou: What's the Significance?

Magid is the *Mitzvah* of relating the story of the Exodus from Egypt and is the central portion of the *Seder*. The words "*Bibhilo* *Yatzanu MiMitrayim*" (Aramaic for "in haste, we left Egypt") are written in the Rambam's *Hagada* (Hilchot Hametz Umatza, Nusah HaHagada), and many authentic Sephardic *Hagadot* incorporate this text. As a segue into the *Magid* section, there is a Moroccan custom to chant "*Bibhilo*" while the head of the family passes the *Seder* plate over the heads of those present. Rabbis Yosef Benaim (Noheg Behochma) and Baruch Toledano (Kitzur Shulhan Aruch, pg. 147) attest to this longstanding tradition in the Moroccan community. Furthermore, the student of the Rosh's son, Rabbi Itzhak El Khadab (Hagada Pesah Ledorot) writes that even by the thirteenth century there was a custom in Spain to pass the *Seder* plate over the heads of the children who were present at the *Seder*. Rabbi Haim Palagi (Haim Lerosh) discusses this custom, and the HIDA attests to the presence of this custom in Tunisia.

There is great importance placed on rousing the curiosity of children at the *Seder*, so that they may pose questions and further enhance the telling of the Exodus from Egypt. The Shulhan Aruch (Orah Haim 472:16) gives the example of handing out treats to children so that they notice a difference from regular meals, and then ask questions. In a similar vein, Rabbi Itzhak Hazan (Hagada Ko Lehai) cites Rabbeinu Simha, who says that by raising the *Seder* plate, there is a departure from the normal events that take place at a typical meal, thereby encouraging the children to inquire. Another reason, writes Rabbi Yosef Benaim (ibid.), is that the plate raised above the attendees' heads is symbolic of the *Anane*

Hakavod (lit. "Clouds of Glory") which protected the Jewish people when they left Egypt. Rabbi Haim Palagi says that, on a Kabbalistic level, there are ten *Sefirot* (lit. "Divine Attributes") which are alluded to in the ten items on the *Seder* plate, as described by the Arizal. When lifted, the blessings from these *Sefirot* emanate from the plate and rest upon those present at the *Seder* table.

Summary: Raising the *Seder* plate over the heads of those present at the *Seder* while chanting "*Bibhilo*" is a well established and ancient

The Spiritual Lights That Come Down at the Seder

The Arizal (Rav Yishak Luria of Safed, 1534-1572) taught that on the night of the Seder, a great spiritual light descends from the heavens as a result of the Misvot that we perform. Although we always bring down spiritual light through our performance of Misvot, the Arizal explained that the lights come down on the night of the Seder in a special way. Normally, the lights of "Katnut" ("youth") descend first, before the lights of "Gadlut" ("adulthood"). (More specifically, there is first "Katnut Rishon" and then "Gadlut Rishon," which is followed by "Katnut Sheni" and then "Gadlut Sheni.") On Pesah, however, it is reversed: the great lights of "Gadlut" come down before the smaller lights of "Katnut." It is explained that the order is reversed on this night because it had to be reversed at the time of Yesi'at Misrayim (the Exodus from Egypt). If the smaller lights would have descended first, the

negative spiritual forces in Egypt, which were exceptionally powerful, would have been able to withstand this power. G-d therefore sent down the great lights of "Gadlut" first, which the negative spiritual forces were unable to withstand, and this phenomenon repeats itself each year on the night of the Seder, when we commemorate Yesi'at Misrayim.

The Ben Ish Hai (Rav Yosef Haim of Baghdad, 1833-1909), in his work Od Yosef Hai (Shana Rishona, Parashat Sav; listen to audio recording for precise citation), explains the deeper meaning of the Ma Nishtana on the basis of this concept. He writes that the lights of "Gadlut" come down to the Seder table through the recitation of Kiddush, and then when we dip the Karpas, the "Katnut" lights come down. The children, who are "Ketanim" ("minors") and thus sense the reversal of the sequence of "Gadlut" and "Katnut," ask why things are different on this night, how it is possible for the "adult" lights to come before the "child" lights, resembling an adult turning into a child. The answer to this question is "Abadim Hayinu Le'Pharaoh Be'Misrayim" – we were slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt, a place with a very strong "Kelipa" ("outer shell"), meaning, powerful negative forces. The impurity in Egypt was so strong that if G-d had not redeemed us on the night of Pesah, we would still be there even today. We therefore needed the unusual sequence of "Gadlut" before "Katnut" to break those forces and enable us to leave, and this sequence occurs again each year when we fulfill the Misvot of Pesah.

One might naturally wonder whether the child at the Seder is really aware of this sequence of spiritual lights at the Seder, such that he can ask this question. Many adults cannot comprehend

these esoteric concepts, and certainly these topics lie well beyond the grasp of the young child asking the Ma Nishtana. The Ben Ish Hai writes that Hazal nevertheless established that the child should ask this question because his soul indeed understands these concepts and senses the changes that occur on the night of the Seder. The soul of a "Katan," a child, is especially sensitive to the "Katnut" lights and detects that the "Gadlut" lights come first on this night. Indeed, the Gemara in Masechet Megila (3) comments that often-times a person's soul is able to discern things which we are not consciously able to perceive.

The Ben Ish Hai's comments emphasize the depth and significance of each word of the Haggadah, and even the section which is read by the young children. This is why we make the children recite the Ma Nishtana, as this recitation, whereby the children involve themselves in deep concepts, serves as a Tik-kun (rectification) of their souls. And thus we should be aware that beyond the straightforward meaning of the text of the Haggadah, there are many additional layers of depth and profundity which lend to this night a special dimension of spiritual significance.

- There is a custom when kindling or fueling the fire for burning the Hametz to use items that had been used for other Misvot, such as the Arba Minim and the wicks from the Hanukah candles. One should refrain from activities such as sewing, laundry and haircutting during the afternoon of Erebb Pesah. One who wishes to take a haircut on the afternoon of Erebb Pesah must go to a non-Jewish barber. It is permissible to shave, polish shoes, cut nails and conduct

business in the afternoon of Erebb Pesah.

- Hacham Ovadia Yosef, both in Yehaveh Da'at (5:34) and in Hazon Ovadia (p. 230), writes that as **women are included in all the Misvot of Pesah, they must also read the full Hallel before the Seder.** They may recite the Hallel either in the synagogue or at home, but either way they must ensure to recite the full text just as they are obligated to fulfill all the other Misvot that apply on the night of the Seder.
- One should use wine, and not grape juice, for the four cups at the Seder, but women, as well as men for whom drinking four cups of wine poses considerable difficulty, may use grape juice. Preferably, they should mix wine and grape juice, or drink wine for at least the fourth of the four cups.
- All the four cups at the Seder must be drunk while leaning to the left, and one who drinks without leaning must drink the cup again while leaning. If one drank the second cup without leaning, he does not repeat the Beracha of "Asher Ge'alanu" when drinking again. It is advisable for the head of the household to announce before the recitation of "Asher Ge'alanu" that everyone should drink while leaning to the left after the recitation.
- One must lean on his left side while drinking each of the four cups of wine. If one drank a cup without leaning, he must drink another cup while leaning. One does not fulfill the Misva by drinking a cup of wine without leaning. To fulfill the obligation of Heseba (leaning) at the Seder, one must lean to the left

side, at least at a 45° angle, and rest on something, like the back of the chair, a pillow or the table.

- The cup used for the four cups of wine at the Seder must contain at least 86 grams (a little over 3 oz.). One should preferably drink the entire cup, but one fulfills the Misva even if he did not drink the whole cup, as long as he drank the majority. Therefore, it is preferable to use a cup that does not contain much more than the minimum required 86 grams, so one would be able to drink the entire cup or at least the majority of the cup. However, for the first cup of wine, which is also drunk for the requirement of Kiddush, one must ensure to drink the complete amount of 86 grams. One fulfills the obligation of Kiddush only if it is recited over a meal, and since the meal at the Seder is eaten long after Kiddush, one must drink this amount of wine to be considered to have recited Kiddush at a "meal."

The wine should be drunk all at once, rather than sipped, though if one did sip the wine, he has nevertheless fulfilled the obligation.

- When the Seder is held on Mosa'eh Shabbat, one must recite Habdala in conjunction with Kiddush, following the proper sequence. If one realized after Kiddush, but before Karpas, that he had not recited Habdala at Kiddush, he must recite Habdala over a cup of wine at that point. If he realized his mistake during Maggid, he should recite the Beracha over the candle at that point and recite the Beracha of Habdala at the end of Maggid, right after the Beracha of "Ga'al Yisrael," over the same cup of wine

over which he recites "Ga'al Yisrael." If he realizes during the meal, he should recite Habdala at that point, and if he realizes during Hallel, then he should recite Habdala after Hallel.

- According to Sephardic custom, Romaine lettuce should be used for Marror. One must ensure that the lettuce is free of insects. Although it is customary to use Romaine lettuce, one may, strictly speaking, use iceberg lettuce, as well. There are those stringent who use endives for Marror. If necessary, one may combine different forms of Marror to reach the required quantity of "Ke'zayit." If one cannot obtain any of these vegetables, he may use for Marror any bitter-tasting vegetable, but the Beracha of "Al Achilat Marror" should not be recited in such a case.
- When one washes his hands for U'rhatz after Kiddush at the Seder, he must comply with all the laws that apply to hand washing before bread, and one should not speak or divert his attention until after he partakes of the Karpas. There is no Beracha made on this Netilat Yadayim. One should make a point to wash his hands inside his home, and not leave to wash his hands elsewhere
- One must wash his hands a second time at the Seder before eating the Masa, even if he had ensured to keep his hands clean since the earlier washing before Karpas. One recites a Beracha over this second washing, even if he had mistakenly recited a Beracha over the first washing. The one leading the Seder holds all three Masot in his hands while reciting the Beracha of "Hamosi," and

then puts down the bottom Masa for the recitation of the Beracha of "Al Achilat Masa." He should eat a Ke'zayit from each of the two Masot, whereas everyone else may eat just one Ke'zayit. Salt may be added to the Masa, and according to Kabbalistic teaching it is proper to add salt to the Masa.

- One should not lean or recline during the reading of Maggid. Instead, it should be read in an upright position, and with a sense of awe and reverence.
- The reading of Maggid should be completed before Chatzot (midnight as defined by Halacha). This means that one should recite the concluding Beracha of "Asher Ge'alanu" before Chatzot. BeDiavad, if he finished after Chazot, he still may make the Beracha of "Asher Ge'alanu". After the Seder, one should continue learning and discussing the Exodus and the laws of Pesach until he feels the need to go to sleep.
- At the Seder, one must eat for the Afikomen at least one Kezayit of Masa, within four minutes (or at most seven minutes), while leaning. Some have the custom to eat two Kezetim. One who did not lean while eating the Afikomen should eat another Kezayit while leaning, unless he is too full to eat more Masa. One may not eat or drink anything on the night of Pesah after the Afikoman, except for the two remaining cups of wine, and water. One may also drink tea or coffee to help him stay awake.

If a non-Jew will be coming to one's home during Pesah, such as a workman who comes to do repairs, it is preferable to respectfully ask that he does not

bring Hametz into the home, but strictly speaking, the non-Jew may be allowed to enter the home with Hametz, as long as one ensures to remove any crumbs that are left.

Salt of the Omer

(By Haham Amram Assayag)

It is customary in some Sephardic Kehilot, amongst them the Mekubalim and all Moroccan Communities, to give out on the second night of Pesah when we begin to Count the Omer. Some take salt for every member of the Family.

Salt takes a prominent place in Jewish rituals that one can trace back to the very first days of Hashem "s creation of the world. The creation of the Heavens came about by the division of the waters that hovered over a vacuum that was soon destined to be the world.

The pasuk states: "Vayabdel ben hamayim asher mitahat laraqi'a uben hamayim asher me'al laraqi'a." – "And [Hashem] divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament."

The Midrash [cited by Rashi, Vayikra 2:13] says that when the earthly waters saw that their fate was to remain on earth while the other waters were destined to form the Heavens, they began to cry. They exclaimed: "Woe unto us that we are not worthy of staying close to our Creator, and we must be near impurities." Hashem ordered that they should stop crying because as a comforting gesture He assured them that He will order the earthly waters to be presented as a libation

upon the altar. The Midrash states that this was not satisfactory to the waters, as *nisukh hamayim* (the water libation) took place only once a year. So Hashem promised them that He would also make a covenant with the salt contained in them (i.e. the oceans), to be placed on the altar with every offering. Thus, the commandment:

“Vekhol qorban minhatekha bamelah timlah velo tashbit melah berit Elohekha me’al minhatekha al kol qorbanekha taqrib melah.” – “And your every meal offering shall you season with salt; you may not discontinue the salt of your G-d’s covenant from upon your meal offering, on your very offering shall you offer salt.”

The “Omer”, which is the name of a measure for grains, is also the name of the meal offering brought to the Temple on the second day of Pesah. In order to allow the Jews to enjoy the new crop of grain, we first present an offering of that grain to the Bet HaMiqdash, after which time we, as individuals, make enjoy the produce of the new crop. On Shabuot, we will collectively offer to the Bet HaMiqdash, two breads made from the new grain. This offering is known as *Mincha* Hadasha LAdo-nai – a new offering to Hashem. The acronym of these Hebrew words is the letters Mem Lamed Het (מ"ל"ה"), which form the word *Melah* (מלח) – salt. In honour of this special offering symbolized by salt we, too, take salt at the time that this offering would have taken place. The word *Lehem* (לחם) – bread, is formed with the same letters as *Melah* (מלח), hence the constant connection between bread and salt. Therefore, on the second day of Pesah, when the new offering will allow us to begin eating the new bread, we take along salt to our own altar – one’s table at home.

This may be a possible explanation for our ancient custom; however it does not yet address the mystical dimension attributed to the salt. Indeed, this salt serves as a protection from the evil eye (“*ayin hara*”), which explains why every family has used it similar to an amulet [Debeq Meah §70:16 by Ribbi Abraham Hamaoui ~1850 and Ben Ish Hai (Year 1, Sav §6)].

The 13th century commentator Rabenu Bahya of Saragossa, through his discussion of the Kabbalistic characteristics of the salt, may have shed some light on understanding the importance of the salt. He writes that salt is composed by two opposing elements of the four elements of creation: water and fire. Salt exists naturally in the waters of the oceans, yet it is extracted through the means of fire (the sun or artificial fire to stimulate evaporation).

Rabenu Bahya reminds us of what our Hakhamim taught us in reference to the creation of the world. When Hashem decided to create the world, He thought to create it with only the attribute of Justice (*Midat Hadin*), by which man would be accountable immediately for his every action and receive retribution accordingly. Hashem realized that the world could not stand with judgment alone, because man, as a potential sinner, would bring about the immediate destruction to his world. Therefore, Hashem incorporated the attribute of Mercy (*Midat HaRahamim*), a means of protection for man until he amends his ways. The fusion of these two attributes allows the world to exist and be sustained. Rabenu Bahya tells us that *Midat HaDin* is represented by the element of fire, while *Midat HaRahamim* is represented by the element of water. Salt is therefore, symbolic of the fusion of these two attributes,

representing the formula for the very maintenance of the world. That is why, he explains, the Tora in the above pasuk refers to salt as the covenant of your G-d (*Berit Elohekha*) because it represents the very covenant of creation that allows the world to exist and not to crumble in the wake of sin. This also explains the chemical preservative qualities of salt, which serves to maintain a substance and the spiritual protective dimensions attached to it.

The original prayer recited on the first night according to *Sidur HaRashash* is as follows:

“Yehi rason milefanekha Ado-nai Eloheinu vElohe abotenu, bizkhut sefirat ha’omer asher sivitanu beToratekha ubizkhut shemotekha haqedoshim, vehatehorim, hayose-im mehamizmorim halalu hayose-im merashé tebot umisafé tebot ubizkhut abotenu haqedoshim Abraham, Yishaq, veYa’aqob, sheyihyé zé hamelah li lishmi ulkhol mi sheyisa hamelah hazé „alav yihyé lo lemaghen vesina, mideber umimaghefa, ume“ayin hara”, umikol dabar ra, Amen ken yehi rason.”

H_{ag}

HaMimouna

(Maghen Abot - e"H Ribbi Mordekhai Lebhar s"t)

Towards the end of Pesah we all anticipate with much joy, "Hag haMimouna" where we have the custom to eat special foods such as *Moufleta* and *Sbeqia*, sing songs, play festive Arabic music, decorate our houses, dress in *djelaba* *oulkaftan*, and much more. We have the custom to open our houses to the people of

the community and allow them to come in and taste from the wonderful foods and take part in this joyous occasion. It is only until one of our holy brothers/sisters walks into the finely decorated house, praising the table spread, and asks the infamous question, "So this Mimouna is for what again?" Hopefully to ask for the last time because here is what you tell them...

Origins of Mimouna

Contrary to popular belief, the Mimouna is not exclusively a Moroccan Minhag. In Turkey, Syria, Tunisia, and other countries, the common minhag was to put out a bowl of flour with coins or green vegetables a sign of berakha that the future will bring. It seems that the underlying theme of Mosé Pesah is one of a time for berakhot.

E"H Ribi Eliyahou Bitton s"t in his sefer *Netivot haMa'arab* explains that Mimouna dates back to the time of the Geonim.^[1] The final day of Pesah is associated with the coming of the Mashiah (the Messiah), and as we conclude the Hag haGeula (Pesah) our hopes turn to the building of the third Bet haMiqdash and partaking in the feast of the Mashiah, speedily in our days, Amen.^[2] It is for this reason that we read the traditional 'Od Hayom *haftara* (in Hebrew, and Arabic, or Ladino), which discusses the arrogant Sanherib's conquest of Jerusalem and its subsequent downfall with many allusions to the Pesah redemption from Egypt and the final redemption that is still to come, b"H. With this, our hopes of the Mashiah's arrival are high at the end of Pesah, but many are left downtrodden and depressed after the Hag when he does not arrive. Therefore, Mimouna is done to uplift the spirit of the people of 'Am Yisrael,

to strengthen their emuna (faith) and to assure them that the Ma-shiah is still just around the corner, even though he might not have come this Pesah.

[1] The era of the Geonim took place from 4349-4798 [589-1038 C.E.] which followed the Amoraim (Talmudic Era) and preceded the Rishonim.

[2] Ba'al Sem Tob, *Hayom Yom*, pp. 47

Where does the name Mimouna originate from?

Noheg Behokhma mentions another source to Mimouna from the Jews of Tripoli in Libya who have a tradition that the Rambam's father passed away on the 29th of Nisan and the Mimouna celebrations are in memory of him (according to this, the name "Mimouna" comes from Maimon, the Rambam's father).

Noheg Behokhma mentions a few more interesting reasons for Mimouna:

-That the word "Mimouna" refers to food, and this night marks the time when it is again permissible to eat staple grain foods, hence the custom to eat mofleta and couscous on this night,

-That in Tafilaleet in Morocco there were refugees from a city near Sudan called Temimona, which had been destroyed, and they prayed during Pesah that G-d return them to their ancestral homeland,

-That "Mimouna" is related to the Hebrew word for faith, "emuna", and this celebration is an expression of the Jews' faith in G-d that they will be redeemed in the month of Nisan, just as the Redemption from Egypt happened in Nisan.

As we see, the reasons behind this night are deep and

meaningful, therefore we should be especially vigilant to keep an aura of qedusha to the night, and not Has Veshalom waste the tremendous opportunity the night has to offer to achieve higher levels of qedusha.

What do we do for Mimouna?

An especially important practice that was common in Morocco was that on the night of the Mimouna one would go to a Tora scholar and asks for his blessing.

Noheg Behokhma by Rbi Yosef Benaim zs"l mentions an account in the Talmud (Pesahim 30a) that Raba went to see his teacher, Rab Nahman, on the last day of Pesah; this seems to be the source for the custom of going to a Tora scholar to ask his blessing on the night of Mimouna. In the writings of the Arizal it is mentioned that special spiritual emanations descend on the last day of Pesah thus making it an 'Et Rason, an opportune time, to receive blessings.

Moufleta

The minhag we have to prepare and eat Moufleta on Mimouna stems from that which the Kaf haHayim wrote (Siman 491, s"q 11) that the Gaon Mibilna zs"l would strive to taste some hames. The reason behind this is to declare that we never really wanted to refrain from eating hames, rather we did it solely in order to fulfil the misva of not eating hames. We show this by eating hames as soon as we are allowed to. Rbi Haim Halberstam of Sanz zs"l (1793-1876) would make Habdala at the end of Pesah on beer specifically for this reason. Therefore, we eat Moufleta to show that we really want to eat hames but refrained from doing so because of the misva.