

## Galut Mitzrayim: Four Stages of Exile

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rabbi Hershel Reichman

The Shem Mishmuel writes that the Egyptian exile developed in four stages. The first stage began with the birth of Yitzchak. The forefathers lived in Israel as strangers in a civilization under the dominion of the Cananim. After 190 years, Yaakov and his 70 children went down to Egypt, which began the second stage. When all of the twelve tribes died, a new king arose and the third stage of slavery commenced. The fourth stage of *inui* was marked by the harsh decrees of Paro to kill the new born baby boys and to torture the Jews with hard labor and suffering.

The Beit Halevi and other commentators postulate that each level was caused by a

different sin. The first stage transitioned to the second because of the sin of the sale of Yosef. The third stage was triggered by the sin of *moshech orlah*, pulling the foreskin back up to cover the sign of the *brit*. If a Jew is embarrassed of his identity, he fundamentally undoes the purpose of his Jewishness, which is to sanctify the name of Hashem. The Jews tried to find favor in the eyes of the Egyptians by hiding their Jewishness. Therefore, Hashem caused the reverse to happen and they were oppressed even more. The third sin, which caused the progression to the fourth stage of suffering, was their abandonment of the *mitzva of milah*. The blood of *milah* is symbolic of dedicating one's life force to Hashem and

when they rejected that, the Egyptians killed the babies.

Another possible cause for this last level was that many Jews became informers. Instead of supporting each other in their pain and travail, they became traitors to their people. Only 1/5 of the people who suffered as slaves left Egypt. Those who turned their backs on their brothers died during the plague of darkness.

May we merit to atone for the failure of the previous generations, by sanctify the name of Hashem, standing proud as Jews, and growing in unity and *ahavat Yisrael*.

## The Four Cups

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rabbi Shimon Isaacson

The Mishna in Pesachim says that at the *seeder*, every person must drink four cups of wine even if a person is so poor that he has to beg money for them. The Tosfot points out the language of the Mishna, *Lo yifch'su lo*, he should not have less, which doesn't seem to include his family. Therefore, Tosfot learns that the head of the household can be *motzi* (exempt) others in the performance of their obligation just as he does on Shabbat. This Tosfot seems difficult. The Maharal points out that the general principle of *shomea k'oneh* (listening and fulfilling the *mitzva* through someone else's speech) only applies to *mitzvot of amira* and *kriah* such as *kiddush* or *megilah*. However, *mitzvot* that must be performed with one's body, such as the four cups where the actual drinking is the *mitzva*, can't be fulfilled vicariously. Yet Tosfot maintains, bringing proof from the Mishna, that the *mitzva* is to say the *hagadah* over the cup of wine, and not the drinking.

Just as in *Kiddush* we solemnize the words on a cup of wine, at the *seeder* we have four different recitations on the four cups of wine. The first cup is *Kiddush*. The second cup is poured before *Mah Nishtana* and drunk at the conclusion of *Magid*. We recite *bentching* on the third cup and *Hallel* on the fourth cup. The Gemara asks, what is the *halacha* if a person drinks the four cups of wine at once, *b'vat achat*? Rashi says *b'vat achat* means pouring

all four cups into one giant cup and drinking it. The Rashbam says it means drinking them in quick succession, one after the other. According to Tosfot, one has not fulfilled the *mitzva* because the *mitzva* is to recite the *Hagadah* on a cup of wine. The Rambam and the Rif disagree. As Tosfot maintains, one aspect of the *mitzva* is reciting the *hagadah* on the wine, but another aspect is drinking the wine itself. So drinking one cup after the other fulfills the *cheirut* aspect, but not the *seeder hadevarim al hakos* aspect.

We pour the wine before *Magid* and *Hallel* to reflect the opinion of Tosfot. The Shiblei Haleket points out, that just as the cup of wine is lifted for *Kiddush*, ideally a person should hold the cup throughout the recital of the *Hagadah* and *Hallel*.

Tosfot rules that during the year a woman does not have an obligation to say *Hallel*, a time-bound *mitzva*, and therefore cannot be *motzi* her husband. But on Pesach since the *Hallel* is related to the four cups, which women are obligated to drink, a wife could be *motzi* her husband.

The Rambam says one should drink most of the cup. Tosfot quantifies that it means a cheek full. The Shulchan Aruch concurs that ideally the one who makes *kiddush* should drink a cheek full, but it can be divided among

the people listening to the *bracha*, because there's no formal obligation to drink wine. Tosfot holds the same for the four cups. But Rambam says there's a separate obligation to drink the wine. Therefore, ideally a person should drink the whole cup. We rule like the Rambam that there are two aspects to the *mitzva of daled kosot*, the first of *seeder devarim al hakos* can be fulfilled through the head of the household. But the second aspect of drinking *derech cheirut* must be done by the person himself.

Why doesn't the *Mah Nishtana* mention the drinking of four cups? Perhaps one could argue based on Tosfot that the four cups is not so different from *Kiddush* or *bentching* on a cup of wine. The Rambam writes that if one has no wine, one could make *Kiddush* on *matzah* as one could on *Shabbat*. One could also recite the *Magid* and *bentching* on the *matzah*. While one won't fulfill the *cheirut* aspect, one could at least fulfill the *seeder devarim al hapat*.

Each of the four stages of redemption are meaningful and warrants its own expression of gratitude and thankfulness to Hashem. This is a critical aspect of the *seeder* and so we fulfill the fundamental *mitzva* of the *arbah kosot* by reciting the *Hagadah* and *Hallel* over the four cups of wine.



## Haggadah

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rebbetzin Tziporah Heller

We begin *Magid* with *Ha lachma anya* because the *seder* is meant to be a collective experience just as the *korban pesach* was eaten together in a large group. Hashem meant it that way because only Klal Yisrael as a whole can merit redemption. Even if one ends up celebrating the *seder* alone, spiritually we're meant to feel a part of something greater.

The four questions are questions that no child would ever ask. Additionally, most of the questions have not yet happened in the *seder*. So why are they asked? The first question addresses *emunah*. Night symbolizes faith. Day signifies truth. In all other situations that evoke *emunah*, we have to take into ourselves both leaven foods and *matzah*, the essence of simplicity. On this night we are meant to have no self and to see only Hashem's greatness. We are meant to perceive His gift of *orot makifim* (surrounding light), redemption and clarity. The more we internalize this, the closer to redemption we'll be.

In all other experiences we eat any sort of vegetable, but tonight we eat only bitter herbs. Tonight we reject everything that is external. The Maharal says there's no such thing as partial *emunah*. You're either there or not, and tonight you have to be there. *Matzah* is called the bread of *emunah*. It's not that we lift up the *matzah*, it uplifts us. To get to the state of complete faith, there has to be absolute removal of everything that stands in opposition to faith.

Other nights we don't dip and tonight we dip twice. The first time we dip *karpas* in salt water, symbolizing the tears of Egypt. The second time we dip *maror* in *charoset*, signifying the mortar in Egypt. The *charoset* is sweet. We sandwich the bitterness with sweetness. The Maharal says there's no redemption without exile. Until one can say I know what I don't want to be, there's no possibility of opening the door to the future.

On all other nights we eat either sitting or reclining. But tonight we recline in royalty. *Paro* is related to the root word *paruah*, wild. He ruled the people through his essence which was imagination in its most corrupt form, having no borders or sense of accountability. *Mitzrayim* was the ultimate place of limitation. Nothing is more restricted than the little space that's enclosed by the human ego. We were slaves to *Paro* and his subjects in Egypt. We sunk to their level. We closed almost all the gates. And then Hashem took us out with a strong hand and an outstretched arm. A hand is a symbol of fine motor action. Hashem revealed His Divine Providence through the plagues. He showed us that the laws of nature have no binding meaning because they have an author. The *zroeh netuyah* was the great force that turned things completely upside down. If Hashem didn't take us out of *Mitzrayim*, we and our children would still be slaves. We would still be lost in the confusion of freedom without boundaries.

The more one talks about *yetziat Mitzrayim* the more praiseworthy he is, because what you say changes you. The more we talk about

redemption, the closer we are to being redeemable. The greater a person is, the more awareness and mindfulness and detail he can include in his recounting of the Exodus. The five sages in Bnei Brak sat and spoke about *yetziat Mitzrayim* until the students came and said the time has come to say the *shema*. You could talk about exile and redemption but there's a moment of unity when you have to talk about both of them being one. Saying *shema* means accepting the yoke of heaven. It is recognizing that Hashem is the source of all things and that He is taking where we are supposed to go. On this night we move beyond our self imposed limitations, and latch on to Hashem's personalized guidance.

The *Haggadah* takes us to the beginning of our nationhood when our forefathers were idol worshipers. We can't talk about liberation until we talk about the roots of exile. Because Hashem is invisible and seems abstract, the early generations worshiped creation. Still Hashem is great enough that no matter where one comes from, one can find Him. The proof is that Avraham and Nachor who came from the same father, lived very different lives. Avraham found Hashem while Nachor raised a son Betuel who was of such low moral character that he took pride in immorality. Exile gave us a sense of uniqueness and a mission. We saw Hashem's judgment and caring and that He was with us all along. We left *b'rechush gadol*, with many possessions, not just physical gold and silver, but with the awareness of our purpose as the chosen nation.