

## Translation of commentary contained in the 1526 Prague Hagaddah<sup>1</sup>

Some examples of the difficulties of translation: dots above letters indicate abbreviations (not modern custom); when letter shared between two words, often duplicated letter isn't written; involved and complicated Gematria (eg: at-bash, where letter is replaced by its alphabetic "mirror", or Gematria is calculated for the spelling of the letter names of the word); in woodcuts, initial letter of next line fills out margins to retain letter symmetry.

===== Translator: Saul London =====  
 Page 1

Why was "in memory of the Exodus from Egypt" established to be said on every Sabbath and Holiday [in the Kiddush]? Because "Egypt worked the children of Israel harshly" [Exodus]. The word "harshly" in *atbash* [*at-bash* is a form of gematria which takes the "mirror-image" of the given letter and substitutes its numeric value, so that *alef* (1) becomes *taf* (400), and *peh-resh-chaf* is *vov-gimel-lamed* which) is 39 in gematria. When God took them out of Egypt, he instructed them concerning Shabbat to abstain from those 39 forms of work [that they did as slaves].

Rav Alphasi ruled that one who has no wine on the Seder night makes Kiddush on "*ripas*." What is the procedure? He makes the blessing, rests his hands on the matzah until he has finished Kiddush and blesses to eat matzah "on eating matzah." Then he dips it and combines mazah and moror without a blessing. [RWS – Maybe *ripas* is *pas*, which means loaf. This would refer to the matzah, and I know that it is permissible to make Kiddush over matzah or challah. (In fact, one of the reasons – among others – given for covering the challah on the Shabbat table while reciting Kiddush is so that it won't be 'insulted' that you're making Kiddush on the wine and not on the challah)]

Page 2

A woman does not have to lean. If she is an important woman, she must lean. [Talmud Pesachim]

"Vayechulu" [first word in Kiddush] is the same as "Chesed" [mercy] in Gematria (72). The world was created with mercy.

Rabbi Yoshua ben Levi says women are required to drink four cups because they were included in the miracle.

The first 5 words of Kiddush ["and the heaven and earth and all their multitudes were completed"] has 5 words and 22 letters representing the 5 books of Torah and 22 letters of the aleph-bet [alphabet] to teach that for anyone who keeps Shabbat it is as if he kept all 5 books and 22 letters.

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*Woodcut caption:* Head of household making Kiddush [note: appears to be using left hand!]

When making Kiddush, and all blessings using wine [eg: *havdala*, *sheva brachot*, etc], you have to hold it in your right [hand] and not support it with the left. In the 7th chapter of the Gemara on blessings, 10 rules about a cup of blessing are given and one is that it is held in the right.

Wash hands for the first dipping. Every thing that is dipped in liquid requires hand washing. Don't wash hands before Kiddush because Kiddush does not require hand washing.

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<sup>1</sup> The page numbers in this explanation is based on those plates of the Haggadah that contained commentary. When a page contains none, it doesn't count toward the numbering.

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The server pours the second cup of wine to praise the master of "something from nothing." [RWS: Note, nice rhyming couplet.]

Say Ma Nishtana in a nice and pleasant tune to praise and to say the honor of his blessed name. But, when it falls on a Shabbat, say it quickly in order to eat the Afikomen before midnight because this particular night is more equivalent [to the original night of leaving Egypt] in a number of ways.

This night (we dip) twice: Once in vinegar and once in Charoset. And so we are restrained not to eat any "dip" on this night such as "shulash" [maybe, such as a third dip] or to dip even matza in wine as we commonly do on other holidays.

One must bless four cups because of four situations that require thanks [Benching Gomail] - all of which occurred in Egypt: 1) Release from prison, 2) Recover from illness [because of the bris they received leaving Egypt], 3) Traveling through the desert, 4) Traveling over sea.

What is the reason for the four cups? For four "rescues" that are written for Israel in the portion of Vayera: "I took out," "I saved," "I freed," and "I took." These are the four "rescues" for the four cups.

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We must sit reclining. On other days of the year we may eat or drink even standing, but on this night, even the poorest man in Israel must sit to eat.

*Woodcut caption:* Treading in mortar.

Charoset in Aramaic are assorted vegetables put together and called charoset. Our charoset must be made thick and is a symbol of the mortar. It contains apples alluding to the verse "Beneath the apple tree I awakened you" (Song of Songs 8:5). It contains --- types of spices, a reminder of the straw that was in the material [for bricks]. It contains nuts alluding to the verse "To a garden of nuts I went down." (Song of Songs 6:11) "I went down" is Israel. [Because Israel "went down" to Egypt]

When one sits don't lean back or forward or to the right but rather to the left. Rashi explains the reason is not to put the wind pipe before the food pipe (to prevent choking). According to this it doesn't matter if you are a lefty or a righty.

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We use 3 matzot for the mitzvah because the first born brought the Pesach sacrifice. It was their first service to God in the place of the Kohanim. The Kohanim always performed their service with 3 types of bread. For this reason we use 3 matzot. – Rokeach.

Why do we break the Afikomen matzah close to the beginning of the telling? Why don't we break it after Kiddush or near the end of the Seder? So that it is close to what we say in "with this bread of poverty" because a poor person is accustomed to broken pieces of bread.

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Seventy years old: On the day that the presidency [of the Sanhedrin] was removed from Raban Gamliel, he [Rabbi Elazar] was a young man. He didn't want to be president because he was only 18. A miracle happened and his hair turned white like an old man. That is why it says "as 70 years old" and not actually 70.

===== Translator: Robyn Shoulson =====

*Page 7:* The comment is on R' Elazar ben Azariah's statement "Lo zachiti," which the comment reads as "I didn't win." I didn't prevail over the Rabbis with my belief that the story of the Exodus should be recited at night, because they were many, and I was one. Until Ben Zoma came and gave this interpretation to the verse that tells us that we must remember our leaving Egypt "all the days of our lives": "The days of our lives" means we must retell the story during the day. The extra "all" means we should retell it at night as well. [And even here the Rabbis don't agree, interpreting the "all" to refer to retelling the story even after the arrival of the Mashiach.] The end of the comment defends his definition of "zachiti" to mean "be victorious" by bringing similar uses of the word. [We might define it to mean "wasn't privileged to ..." See how this is translated in various English Hagaddot.]

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As in the story of Jacob fleeing from Esau (Gen. 28:11) "and he chanced upon the place". Meaning, he came upon God, who is THE place of the world. (One of God's Hebrew names is Makom - place).

Why is God called "Makom"? The numerical value (gematria) of the Hebrew word Makom is 186:

Mem = 40, Kof = 100, Vav = 6, Mem = 40.

If you square the value of each letter in the tetragrammaton (JHVH), and add them together you also get 186:

Yod = 10 x 10 =	100
Heh = 5 x 5 =	25
Vav = 6 x 6 =	36
Heh = 5 x 5 =	25

Also, in the phrase "Thy name since forever", the word "meolam" (since forever) = 186 (i.e. Thy name is 186)

Mem = 40, Ayin = 70, Vav = 6, Lamed = 30, Mem = 40.

So we say: God is the place of the world (Makom), not the world is the place of God.

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I have heard that the Passover seder parallels the feast that we hope to eat in the world to come: "You will set a table for me in front of my enemies" (Psalm 23)

And this is one of the cups that is hinted at on Passover eve. In the future we will be served 3 things: The Great Ox, The Fabulous Bird, and the Leviathan. Here at the seder, we take the Zeroa – the bone – to represent the Great Ox, and the egg represents the Bird, and the Afikomen represents the Leviathan because the matzot are round like the scales of a fish, that are also close one upon another so that there is no room between them.

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It is stated: We are required to recline when we eat matza – but not when we eat maror. The Rashbam explained: matza requires reclining when we eat it at the Seder because it is symbolic of our redemption. Maror does not require reclining because it is symbolic of our slavery.

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God forbid that we should say that our forefathers were idol worshippers! Rather say that since our forefathers recognized their Creator and worshipped Him wholeheartedly, it was strange/foreign to them that the rest of the world should worship oxen and donkeys.

On the eve of Passover one should not eat matza close to the hour of the afternoon prayers (minchah), from 9 hours and above\*\* in order that one should eat the matza at night with good appetite. But one may drink wine

and eat kinds of desserts and vegetables that (*megargerin*?) a man's heart. Drink as much wine as you like – a lot or a little. Rav (a Babylonian Talmud Sage) used to drink wine all day before Passover. The Jerusalem Talmud states that whoever eats matza on the eve of Passover is like one who has intercourse with his betrothed in a house of sex (brothel?) [Meaning that even though he knows he will soon be able to consummate the marriage, he can't wait until the proper time]

\*\* A discussion of the division of the day into 12 daylight hours and 12 darkness hours is too complex for here. Suffice it to say that the 9<sup>th</sup> hour is not necessarily 9 am.

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In Genesis 15:8, God promises Abraham that he and his issue will inherit Canaan. At this point in his life, Abraham has no children, and he asks God: "How will I know that I will inherit this land?" [God's answer is less than reassuring since he tells Abraham that his children will be enslaved in a foreign land for 400 years.]

a) [One of the forms that Gematria can take is to switch each letter with its "mirror" – called "at-bash" – so that aleph is switched with tav, bet with shin, etc.] If you take the first word of Abraham's question: *Bamah* (how, by what means), and parse it in at-bash it adds up to 400:

bet = shin =	300
mem = yod =	10
heh = tzaddi =	90

This alludes to the 400 years of servitude that God tells Abraham his children will endure.

b) Abraham's question is comprised of 4 words, also alluding to these 400 years that they will serve Egypt.

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"And they went down to Egypt under duress"

Jacob should have had to have been dragged down to Egypt with chains of iron as someone who is being taken captive (*shivya*) because of his reluctance to leave the land promised to Abraham (where he now dwelt). And the hint to this is in the first verse of the book of Exodus: "And these are the names of the sons of Israel who went down to Egypt." In Hebrew, the initials of these words spell *shivya* – captivity. However, God took pity on him and drew him down to Egypt by means of Joseph. As the verse in Hosea 11:4 states: "With ropes of man did I draw you, thick ropes of love" meaning that Joseph was as a thick rope of love for Jacob, drawing him to Egypt. He was drawn by love and pity, as it says in Jacob's blessing of his sons (Genesis 49:22) "Joseph is the son of an ox" The word for (*porath*) is spelled without the expected vav, relating the word to *parah* – cow, implying that Joseph was a calf to Jacob's cow. The reference is to a Midrash which describes Jacob as a reluctant cow who does not want to enter the corral. What does the master do? He takes the cow's calf (Joseph) and puts it in the corral, and since the cow longs for the calf, she is drawn after it into the corral.

Also, the tribes (brothers) thought that by selling Joseph to the Ishmaelites and having him brought down to Egypt, then he would fulfill the prophecy to Abraham that his descendants would go down to Egypt and be enslaved there, and by doing so the rest of the children of Israel would be spared this exile.

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Laban asked Jacob to swear by his (Laban's) gods, and by doing this he denies the one God.

"Under duress" – Jacob did not go willingly to Egypt, but was forced to go because Joseph was there. And all this had been according to the word that God decreed on Abraham (Genesis 15:13) "Your descendants will be strangers in a foreign land." Actually, Jacob should have been led into exile in steel chains, but God had mercy on him and drew him to Egypt by means of Joseph. (see previous comment)

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We are not allowed to take the bone and egg from the seder plate and eat them until after the second day of the holiday, since they were part of the mitzvah of the seder plate. Similarly, it is forbidden to use the *Sukkah* decorations until the holiday of *Sukkoth* is over. (The etrog is forbidden until after *Simhat Torah*.)

In order to move the bone and the egg from the seder plate, you put some vegetables or matza in a cup and then you can put the bone and egg in and move them. (Even though there may be some sticks or broken pieces of wood which are actually forbidden to touch or use on the holiday – *muktza*.)

The children of Israel were established, and were fruitful and multiplied in Egypt.

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The gematria for the words of the verse: *Vayishretzu, vayarbu, vaya'atzmu bim'od m'od* (They increased and strengthened very much) is the same (1350) as for the words of the drash: *Yoledet shisha b'keres echad* (She – the Jewish woman – would give birth to six at a time).

“Naked and bare” Naked of clothes and bare of commandments (*mitzvot*).

I have found it said “All who are in need may come and make Passover”, that it refers to converts who have been circumcised and immersed in a *Mikvah*. They, too must bring the Pascal sacrifice, just as full Israelites do. For the verse (Exodus 12:48, Numbers 9:14) says: “If there dwell converts among you for generations, they shall make the Passover.” [Perhaps we would think that since a convert’s ancestors were not enslaved in Egypt they might be exempt from the Pascal sacrifice.]

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“And their cries rose”: Man understands that God will hear his cries. The initials aleph, heh, mem, heh are a form of the verb to make noise/sounds, and are the initials of the words that make up the end of this verse – “to God from the work.”

The children of Israel called with their voices.

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“This is a separation from the ways of the world” – meaning that the Israelites refrained from marital relations when the edict that all male children would be thrown into the Nile was passed.

And the word *Inuy* (torture) [which has just been defined as this separation] refers to marital relations, as it is written in Genesis 31:50, “If you torture my daughters..”, and that is explained as referring to sexual aggression.

“These are the sons” who were thrown into the Nile. And sons are called *amaleinu* – our labors because they come from the strength and vigor of man. As it says in Genesis 43:3, [Jacob’s blessing to Reuben] “You are my strength and the first of my vigor”.

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“An outstretched arm” – this is the sword with which He killed the first-born.

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“Revelation of the holy spirit” That He was revealed to every passerby in Egypt as He slew the first-born. As it says in Deuteronomy 4:34, “In Egypt before your eyes.”

The 10 letters in *pesach*(?) are reflected in the ten plagues that were etched into the staff: *D'tzach Adash B'Achav* [the 10-letter acronym that served as a mnemonic to R' Judah.]

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“Every plague that (*asher*) I brought on Egypt” The word *asher* equals 501 in gematria, and so does *D'tzach Adash B'Achav*.

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I have seen accomplished people who have the custom of dipping their little finger (called the pinky – *zeref*) into the wine cup and sprinkling wine into a plate for each plague. This is because of the hint in the verse in Exodus 15:26 “I will not afflict you with any of the illnesses I brought on Egypt”

The plagues which were brought on Egypt were each in retaliation for an Egyptian transgression:

1. Blood: Because they made it impossible for the women of Israel to purify themselves from their menstrual blood.
2. Frogs: Because they told the Israelites: Bring us insects and crawling animals so that we can toy with them.
3. Lice: Because they made the Israelites honor their bathroom facilities.
4. Wild animals: Because the Israelites had to bring them bears and lions to conduct their hunts/chases.
5. Cattle plague: Because the Israelites had to thresh with their horses and camels, their cattle died .
6. Boils: Because the Israelites had to serve them in their bath houses.
7. Hail: Because they used Israelites to plant their gardens and orchards.
8. Locusts: Because they had the Israelites plant their wheat and barley and other crops.
9. Darkness: There were some evil people among the Israelites, and God wanted to punish them. They died during the 3 days of darkness. God did not want the Egyptians to see this and rejoice in the Jews' misfortune.
10. Plague of the first-born: Because the Egyptians enslaved the Israelites who are called “God's first-born” (Exodus 4:22)

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“The great hand” in gematria equals 72. This is an allusion to the name derived from: “And he traveled, and he came, and he stretched forth” with which Moses split the sea. [These are the opening words of the three verses (Exodus 14: 20-22) “And God's angel, who went before the camp of Israel, traveled and went behind them. . . And he came between the Egyptian camp and the camp of the Israelites. . . And Moses stretched forth his hand. . .” (Where the 72 comes in is not at all explicit here. Perhaps it refers to *chesed* – which is 72, as we mentioned at the very beginning of the Haggadah that the first word in the Kiddush – *vayechulu* – also totals 72 because God created the world with mercy/grace (*chesed*), just as he redeemed us from Egypt with mercy/grace. )]

“The finger of God” R' Ishmael says each of the 5 fingers on God's hand represents one secret of redemption:

1. Little finger: God showed Noah what to do in the ark
2. 4<sup>th</sup> finger: He smote Egypt
3. 3<sup>rd</sup> finger: He inscribed the 10 commandments
4. Between the 2<sup>nd</sup> finger and (#5) the thumb: He described the half-shekel that the Israelites were to give [for the annual census].

With the rest of His hand He will destroy the children of Esau in the future and put an end to the descendants of Ishmael. As it states in Micah 5:8: “You shall lift Your hand against Your besiegers, and all Your enemies will be cut off”

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“And did not give us the Torah” Of what advantage is it to have been brought to Sinai without receiving the Torah? We might say that during the 3-day wait at Sinai before receiving the Torah, all the blind and lame and otherwise disabled people were healed. Also, when the serpent came to Eve in the garden of Eden, a taint was placed on all humanity. The children of Israel who stood at Sinai had this taint removed.

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Why do we use a forelimb as the symbol of the Pascal sacrifice on the Seder plate and not some other meat? Because God stretched forth his arm to save us.

When we say “This is the matzo,” we must take a piece in our hand because this is the matza that we will pronounce the blessing over “Who has commanded us to eat matzo.”

On Passover eve, according to the Rashbam, you must raise the matza and display it to those gathered in order to include them in the performance of this mitzvah.

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There is a custom in the world that a man gives thanks for a good wife because it is written (Ecclesiastes 7:26) “A bad woman/wife is as bitter as death.”

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The word “mortar” (*chomer*) is missing the letter *vav*. It can therefore be seen as an anagram of *r'mach*, which equals 248 [for *R'mach eivarav*, meaning “his 248 bones”]. We speak of the 248 limbs or bones within the human body. This implies that our fathers’ lives were embittered by hard work with all of their bodies. And God brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand to demonstrate His greatness and sovereignty. [This is referenced, for instance, in the *Mi Shebeirach*, where we ask for the health of the *r'mach* (248) bones and the *sh'sa* (365) muscles of the body.]

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Raise the cup and do not replace it until you complete the blessing *Borei pri hagefen*.

Raise the cup in your hand and say aloud:

Nine synonyms for praise in this prayer parallel the 9 words in the *kedusha*: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts. The world is filled with His glory.” (*Kadosh, kadosh, kadosh, Adonai tzva'ot, m'lo kol ha'aretz k'vodo.*)

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And Hallel is the 10<sup>th</sup> form of praise, paralleling the 10 kinds of praise poetry in Psalms. Rabbi Joshua ben Levi enumerates them thus:

1. *Ashrei*
2. *Shir*
3. *Nitzuach*
4. *nigun*
5. *mizmor*
6. *maskil*
7. *t'fila*
8. *t'hila*
9. *hoda'a*
10. *hallelujah*

And “Hallelujah” is the greatest of them all for it includes within one word both God’s name (*yah*) and praise (*hallelu*)

This recitation of Hallel is said without the usual preliminary blessing because it comes naturally as part of the recitation of the wonders of the exodus. This is also why it is appropriate to continue to hold the cup of wine now until the blessing over the wine. And this was the custom of the Maharal.

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There is an extra *yod* in some of the verbs in this psalm (eg *magbihi*, *mashpili*, *mkimi*). As if to tell us that the Shechina (the divine presence) only descended 10 (*yod*) handbreadths.

In this chapter of Psalms are 5 words with the extra *yod*. These five extra *yods* (numerical equivalent of 50) make up for the *nun* (numerical equivalent of 50) which is not included in the alphabetic psalm of *Ashrei* (Psalms 145). The *nun* is missing to allude to the verse in Amos 5:2 *Nafla lo tuchal kum* (“She has fallen and cannot rise again”)

[I can’t get this math to work] “(He restores) the barren woman of the house” is 1187 in gematria to allude to the mothers: Sarah, Rebecca and Rachel (1150) who all had trouble conceiving. Leah (who was not barren) is 36, which brings the total to 1186. [This may be total invention on my part. The text here mentions the first 2 words of the verse, which come to 1150, but that number didn’t come close to anything, so I “substituted” the second 2 words (1187). Then, the three barren mothers are mentioned by name, and then there is an indecipherable abbreviation, which I took the liberty of reading as Leah. At least now the numbers are closer.]

[More gematria, which is not always an exact science. Sometimes it’s like horseshoes and grenades and “almost” does count.]: *Em* (or to get it exact, *ema* - 42) is 41 in gematria. *Yocheved*, Moses’ mother is 42. It is she who is referred to in the closing verse in this psalm, “The mother of sons (Aaron and Moses) rejoices”.

All of the redemptions have been/will be brought about by *Em* (*aleph and mem*):

- Redemption from Egypt                      Aaron and Moses
- Redemption from Haman                      Esther and Mordecai
- Future redemption                              Elijah and the Messiah

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*Yehuda l’kadsho* “The tribe of Judah honors Him”. This refers to Nachshon ben Aminadav of the tribe of Judah who was the first to jump into the Red Sea even before it split, thereby exhibiting his faith in God and bringing honor to Him.

*Hayam ra’ah vayanos* “The sea fled” in Joseph’s honor because it is told of him how he “fled outdoors” when being seduced by Potiphar’s wife. In his honor, his descendants merited to have the sea flee before them.

*Ma lecha hayam ki tanus* “Why do you flee, O sea?” Moses asked the sea – will you split? The sea answered – no. I do what God has assigned me to do and flow. Then, when the sea beheld God Himself, it turned and fled. So Moses asked, “Why do you flee, O sea?” The sea answered – I do not flee from you, but from the God the Master (?chuli =) who brought forth the earth, or who causes the earth to tremble.

*Hahofchi hatzur agam mayim* “Who transforms the rock into a pool of water” When Moses first struck the rock, blood flowed from it. Psalms 78:20 states “He struck the rock and its waters flowed”. The word “flowed” alludes to blood as in the Biblical verse (Leviticus 15:25) “When a woman has a flow of blood.” Moses asked God “why did the rock bring forth blood?” “You are indebted to the rock from whence you came” was God’s answer as it states in Deuteronomy 32:13, “and He suckled him with honey from the rock” [So you should not have struck it.] So Moses prayed to God Who forgave him and changed the blood to water. As the verse we read here: “He transforms the rock to a pool of water: And this reversed the first plague where we read “and the waters in the river turned to blood.”



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Women are also obligated to drink 4 cups of wine at the seder.

You should drink 4 full cups of wine and not have someone else drink it for you. Each person is required to fulfill this mitzvah.

The woman says “Amen” to the prayer over wine because women are obligated in this mitzvah just as men are. [Probably in the 1500’s it was not expected that a woman would be able to follow the Hebrew of the Haggadah or say the blessing by herself, so she is able to meet her obligation by answering “Amen” to the man’s recitation of the blessing and then drinking her wine.]

There are some who say of the Elder Hillel that he would make a “sandwich” of the matza and maror and eat them together to fulfill the Biblical statement about the Pascal sacrifice, “You shall eat it on matza and maror” The explanation for this is to let all those at the seder know that we are not adding a new mitzvah of eating this maror sandwich, just that we should eat these two together because we are uncertain of exactly how to fulfill the mitzvah of eating matza and maror. [In other words, *korech* is not a new mitzvah, just one way of fulfilling the existing commandments to eat matza and maror.] This was Hillel’s interpretation which was not the same as other Rabbis [This way we cover all bases/opinions.]

And then there are versions that actually say *zecher lemikdash* “In memory of the temple”. I heard from one sage (R’ Koppelman, z”l) that we must mention the destruction of the Temple at the seder when we are eating the maror, because the same night of the week that the seder falls on, the fast of Tisha B’av falls on. And that is the meaning of the juxtaposition matza and bitter herbs.

This is also why the verse in Lamentations 2:19 “Arise and wail/sing at night” is written with the heh in *laylah* “ – night – missing, for the eve of Pesach (redemption) and the eve of Tisha B’av (destruction) are the same night. Thus God tells Israel – all rule is in My hands. If you don’t obey, I bring evil instead of good. Don’t say that Passover Eve night is a lucky day for Israel and only good can come on it. He showed them that both evil and good can come on the same night.

## Page 33

Seder instructions:

Drink leaning to the left, then wash and say the blessing:

Take the first matza (the top one) and say:

But don’t eat before taking the middle piece and saying:

Then eat some of both and pass it around. Then take Maror and say:

Dip it in the charoset, eat it and pass it around.

Take an olive-sized piece of the *maror* and immerse it completely in the *charoset* but don’t soak it so much that the bitter taste is overshadowed, so that you should shake off some of the *charoset*. Then bless “. . . on the eating of the *maror*” and eat it without leaning. You should not make the blessing “. . . Who creates the fruit of the earth” because – according to the *Rashbam* – you have already fulfilled this obligation when you said that blessing over the *karpas* that was dipped in salt water in the first dipping. The *Orach Chayim* . . . [My best approximation follows:] The *Orach Chayim* brings several references, from the *Rambam*, the Jerusalem Talmud, and local customs to describe exactly what *charoset* and *maror* are. *Maror* could be the *chazeret*, which could be romaine lettuce (= *chasa*, from the word *chas* which means “took pity”), (also because the Egyptians cooked with horseradish (*chazeret*)). If you don’t have romaine lettuce, it is good to use endive. The Sephardic custom involves making the charoset with dates.

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Main instructions (in bold in main text): Afterward, take the third matza – the bottom one – break it in two and put [text unclear] on it and eat them together without another blessing, but say the paragraph “thus did Hillel do in the days of the Temple. . .”

Then eat and drink as you like. After the meal, take the Afikomen and eat it, leaning to the left, and give some to everyone else at the seder. Then wash your hands again – without blessing “*al netilat yadayim*” – pour the third cup for Grace after meals. After Grace, pour the fourth cup and recite . . . (continues in Hagaddah on next page)

The marginal notes: First is a list of vegetables that qualify as *chazeret*: horseradish or lettuce, chervil and endive.

The shamash (Rabbi’s assistant?) should not eat the Afikomen when he is walking around the house, because it will seem as though he is eating in several places. And it is customary for the householder to bless all four cups of wine with everyone in mind in case anyone should miss one of the blessings.

This is what Rav Hillel says in the name of the Gemara: A man blesses the matza and maror together because we are not sure whether in these days when we no longer bring sacrifices only the matza is a biblical requirement and the maror is a rabbinic addition or whether the maror is also still a biblical requirement.

The verse states “You shall eat it (the Pascal offering) with both matza and maror.” Matza is sweet and maror is bitter. The matza hints at God’s mercy and the maror refers to His justice. There follow several references to both of these attributes in the biblical writings: In Song of Songs: “My beloved is white and ruddy [white = mercy, red = justice].” In Psalms David refers to the “laws of God’s righteousness” – laws being justice, and righteousness mercy. In the book of Ruth, Naomi asks not to be known any longer as Naomi (pleasantness) but rather Marah (bitterness), referring to both mercy and justice.

One must be careful not to fall asleep during the Afikomen eating, because it will seem as though he is eating twice (the second time being when he wakes up and finishes his Afikomen). Then he will be obligated for all the obligations that apply whenever you eat bread (matza) with a meal. The Orach Chayim and Reuven Mordechai comment on this and on the Grace obligation.

#### Page 35

Don’t do this for us, God, to whom You promised to send the Messiah, but do it for the sake of Your reputation (so that it will be known that when You promise, You keep Your word)

#### Page 36

It says “They [the idols] will make no noise with their throats” Where have we seen the use of the phrase “noise of the throat” in reference to God on high?

The verse refers to God (*Yah*) as the foundation of the worlds. God created the 2 worlds with the 2 letters of His name, *yod* and *heh*. He created the world to come with a *yod*, and the world we live in with a *heh*. As it says: “These are the generations of the heavens and earth as He created them.” (Gen.) The Hebrew *b’hibar’am* can also be read as *b’heh bar’am* – He created them (heavens and earth) with a *heh*.

The *heh* is one of God’s names. And so David wrote in the Psalms: “The heavens were created at God’s word, and the heavenly host at the breath of his mouth.” The letter *heh* is pronounced only as a breath, and that is a pronunciation of the throat. This brings us back to the idols who cannot pronounce the *heh*, and have no breath to bring about what God did. Even if magicians or ventriloquists will try to make it look as though an idol is speaking, they cannot reproduce the breathy sound of the *heh*. The lingual sounds that the idols cannot pronounce are included in the earlier statement, “they have a mouth yet they cannot speak.”

#### Page 37

“The dead will not praise You” The dead are the evil doers, for even when they are alive, they are called dead. As our sages said on the verse “And Terah died in Haran.” But of the righteous it is said, “My entire soul will praise You.”

*Yordei Duma* = those who have gone down to silence (another way of saying the dead, to balance the first half of the verse.) Another interpretation: *Duma* is the Angel of Death. In the future, when Elijah the Prophet returns to prepare us for the arrival of the Messiah, he will slay the Angel of Death.

Page 38

A certain Rabbi (can't decipher name) would not allow not-yet-bar-mitzvah youths recite [aloud] the verses of *Hodu* on Pesach night, because they cannot fulfill this obligation for the adults. [I understand this to mean that this Rabbi believed the recitation of *Hodu* to be a requirement, not just a voluntary recitation. If so, then an adult must recite it. He feared that if the children would recite it aloud first, the adults might feel as though they had said it when they responded with the *Hodu* refrain.]

Page 39

"The Lord is my strength and my song One half of His Name does wonders (*Yah*) – as in Psalms 89:9 "Who is like Thee in might, *Yah*?"

[Very sophisticated (read convoluted!) *gematria*:] In this case, you take the 2 letters of the first half of God's name, *yod* and *heh*, and you spell them out – *yod, vav, daled*, and *heh, alef*. Then you total the value of those 5 letters and you get 26 just as the full four-letter name of God adds up to.

Thus: "*Yah* is my strength and my song"

And: "If *Yah* should preserve and remember all our iniquities, who among us could remain standing?" (Psalms 130:3]

Page 40

"This is the day that the Lord hath made (*asa*)."  
In this context, *asa* means grew, made large. As in the verse "And she shall do her nails" (*asta tziporneha*). [This source verse is part of the description of what must happen in order for an Israelite man to marry a woman who has been captured in war. She must first shave her hair and grow her nails to mourn her parents – and possibly make herself unattractive to him – and after this mourning period she is permitted to him.]

Midrash:

When Jesse was old, and all of his sons except David had been born, he became angry with his wife and refused to sleep with her. He approached a young girl and asked her to immerse herself in the mikva and come to his bed that night. The girl told the wife, who said – you sleep in my bed tonight, and I'll take your place. And so David was conceived that night. When they saw she was pregnant, everyone – Jesse included – assumed that she had had extra-marital relations. So he hated the child and did not include him with his brothers, but sent him out to be a shepherd. Winter and summer he was with the shepherds. Then, when David was chosen to be king, his mother recited *od'cha Hashem* "Thank you God for you have answered me and been my salvation." Until now I have been despised and suspected of harlotry by all. And David said: *Even ma'asu habonim* "The stone which the builders have rejected has become the cornerstone" Until now I have been rejected by my brothers, and now I have been anointed King over them. And Jesse himself said: *meyeyt Hashem hayta* "Surely this is from God. It is amazing to me." Until now I thought David was a bastard. And Samuel the prophet who had come to anoint David said: *Zeh hayom asa Hashem* "This is the day that the Lord has made for us to rejoice therein."

Thus it states at the end of the book of Ruth: "And Jesse begat David". For until he was anointed King, there was some doubt as to his parentage.

Page 41

*Baruch habah* The people standing in the Temple would greet those who brought the gifts of first fruit: "Blessed are you who come in God's name, we bless you from God's house." They would respond, "May He Who has brought us here safely continue to light our way", as they brought fruit and lambs for the holiday, and Pascal sacrifices to the altar. And there were many who came to the altar.

Rabbi Joshua ben Levi points out that there are 26 verses in this Psalm of *Hodu* as there are 26 generations from the time of the creation during which God tempered his justice with mercy. [10 generations from Adam to Noah: Adam, Seth, Enosh, Kenan, Mahalel, Yered, Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, Noah. 10 generations from Noah to Abraham: Shem, Arpachshad, Shelah, Eber, Peleg, Reu, Serug, Nahor, Terah, Abraham. 6 generations from Abraham to Moses – and the redemption: Isaac, Jacob, Levi, Kehat, Amram, Moses.] [God's 4-letter name refers to His merciful side, and this name also totals 26.]

*Page 42*

Hard to read. Somewhat rambling, free translation: “To the slayer of the Egyptians by their first-born” The Egyptians were slain by their own first-born, because when the Egyptian first-born appealed that they release the Israelites so that they would not be slain, Pharaoh refused because he was not the first-born of his father, but of his mother. So the Egyptian first-born went on a rampage and killed other Egyptians.

*Page 43*

The prayer says “Even if our mouths were as full as the sea...” And yet you say there is a verse in Ecclesiastes 1:7 that says “All the rivers flow to the sea, yet the sea is not full!” This is the resolution: The sea is not full means it can hold no more water, but wherever rivers and streams empty, the waters also return – so the sea can always receive the waters of the streams.

*Page 44*

“You have lifted us” is like – You have raised us up as in “My eyes are raised to heaven” [Isaiah 38:14] and “I will glorify You for You have raised me up” [Psalms 30:2]

“They (f.)/they (m.) will thank and bless and praise and glorify...” The mathematical equivalent of *hen hem* is 100 just as there are 100 blessings per day that man should say.

*Page 45*

Can't read completely. [The word *koma* is spelled with a *vav*, and it is not from the same root as *koma*, and you will find a *vav* in all the ??]

*Page 46*

According to the Maharal, when we finish the song *Az rov nissim*, we also say *Gvurotechah erez* [this must be a poem sung in other traditions, perhaps it can be found in a Sephardic Haggadah.] And after that *Vayehi bachatzi halaylah*, not *ve'amartem zevach pesach*.

The verses of the song *Az rov nissim* refer to different characters. The first to Abraham, then Avimelech, then Laban, then Jacob, then Daniel (Baltshazzar), then Esther and then Haman (page 47)

*Page 47*

There are 7 verses here [mentioning "L'cha"] representing the 7 heavens. And some say the repeated chorus (“To thee. . . L'chah ul'chah) represent the 7 planets [a planet in Hebrew is *kochav lechet* using 2 of the letters of *l'chah*]. [There are 7 initials following this, referring to the Hebrew names of the 7 planets.] Meaning that all is Yours and You rule all. Another interpretation: There were 7 kings who ruled the entire world [they are not listed], and the Messiah will be the 8<sup>th</sup> king. And God rules over all the kings as it says (??source??) “And He *?mahad?* kings and sets up kings”.

**Simplified explanations for use in one's seder:***Page 11:*

On the eve of Passover one should not eat matzah close to the hour of the afternoon prayers in order that one should eat the matzah at night with good appetite. But, drink as much wine as you like – a lot or a little. The Jerusalem Talmud states that whoever eats matzah on the eve of Passover is like one who has intercourse with his betrothed in a house of sex. [This means even though he knows he will soon be able to consummate the marriage, he can't wait until the proper time.]

*Page 13:*

Jacob didn't want to go Egypt, because he was reluctant to leave the land God promised to Abraham. Thus, he needed to be dragged down to Egypt with chains of iron, as someone who is being taken captive. But, God took pity on him and drew him to Egypt using Joseph. As the verse (in Hosea) states: "With ropes of man did I draw you, thick ropes of love," meaning this: Jacob's love for Joseph was a rope of love, and that love drew Jacob to Egypt. A Midrash describes Jacob as a reluctant cow who doesn't want to enter the corral. What does the master do? He takes the cow's calf (Joseph) and puts it in the corral; since the cow longs for the calf, she is drawn after it into the corral.

(Recalling Joseph and Amazing Dreamcoat:) The tribes (brothers) thought by selling Joseph to the Ishmaelites and having him brought down to Egypt, Joseph would fulfill the prophecy that Abraham's descendants would go down to Egypt and be enslaved there. By selling Joseph into slavery in Egypt, his brothers hoped to spare the rest of the children of Israel.

*Page 24:*

"And did not give us the Torah." What advantage is it to have been brought to Sinai without receiving the Torah? We might say during the 3-day wait at Sinai before receiving the Torah, all the blind and lame and otherwise disabled people were healed. Also, when the serpent came to Eve in the garden of Eden, a taint was placed on all humanity. The children of Israel who stood at Sinai had this taint removed.

*Page 32:*

Some say Hillel would make a "sandwich" of the matza and maror and eat them together to fulfill the Biblical statement about the Pascal sacrifice ("You shall eat it on matza and maror"), But the Pascal sacrifice is not longer allowed because the Temple no longer exists. Thus, it isn't clear how to fulfill the mitzvah of eating matza and maror - perhaps we shouldn't eat them. To show that we are not adding a new mitzvah (eating this maror sandwich), the Haggadah mentions that the great Hillel did it as one way of fulfilling the existing commandments. (This was Hillel's interpretation, which was not the same as other Rabbis.)

*Page 36:*

It says "They [the idols] will make no noise with their throats" The phrase "noise of the throat" in refers to God. One of God's names is composed of a *yod* and a *hey*. (God created two worlds with those letters - the world to come with the *yod*, and the world we live in with a *heh*.) The letter *heh* is pronounced only as a breath, a pronunciation of the throat. This brings us back to the idols - even if magicians or ventriloquists try to make it look as though an idol is speaking, they cannot reproduce the breathy sound of the *heh*. The lingual sounds the idols cannot pronounce are referred to earlier, "they have a mouth yet they cannot speak."