

לזכות
הרה"ת ר' שלום דוב בער
וזוגתו מרת חיל' מושקא
ובנותיהם ברכה ליפשא,
עליזה ושיינדל שיחיו
שוחאט



The Rebbe's Haggga



Concision. Precision. Depth.

adah

Over the centuries, there has hardly been another *sefer* in all of Jewish teaching that has as extensive and lengthy commentary written about it like the *Haggadah Shel Pesach*.

Among all these writings, one small commentary stands out above the rest: The Rebbe's Haggadah, which he humbly called "*Haggadah shel Pesach im Likkutei Minhagim V'taamim*"—Haggadah with a compilation of customs and reasons. But a mere reading of this magnificent work reveals a depth of explanation and clarity unparalleled anywhere else.

In honor of the Yom Tov of Pesach, we take a deeper look at the Rebbe's first original published *sefer*.

Reb Avraham Hirsh Cohen was a Lubavitcher *rav* who, as *yungerman*, studied in Kolel Mea Shearim, a kolel in Yerushalayim that included all kinds of *yungeleit*: Lubavitchers, Polishers, and non-Chassidim.

Rabbi Yosef Tzvi Segal related: Reb Avraham had a tremendous *koch* in the Rebbe's *haggadah* ever since it was published in 5706*. Every year starting around Purim time—30 days before Pesach—he would begin studying it in depth for two hours every day.

Reb Hirsh Kopshitz—a well respected *lamdan*—also studied in the kolel, and when he saw Reb Avraham Hirsh expending so much effort on the *haggadah*, he said to him, "Why should a *talmid chacham* like you study this *haggadah* so much?!"

"Let's sit down for a few minutes and learn one piece, even just one question together," Reb Avraham Hirsh replied. They began learning a part of the *haggadah* where the Rebbe discusses the "four questions" of the *sefer* night, and why the question of *mesubin*—why we lean on this night—comes last.

The Vilner Gaon answers this question a certain way, but the Rebbe questions his answer, and leaves

things with "*tzarich iyun gadol*," meaning that it's a very serious question.

Rabbi Kopshitz tried to come up with an answer for the Gr"a but wasn't successful, so he asked if he could borrow the *haggadah* for a day. After realizing that the question was indeed a strong one, he decided to take it to Rabbi Yitzchak Zev Soloveitchik (also known as the Brisker Rav, or by the name of his *sefer*, the Chiddushei Hagriz).

The next day, Rabbi Kopshitz reported that he had sat for a long time with Rabbi Soloveitchik trying to come up with an answer, but the effort had proven unsuccessful. Rabbi Soloveitchik asked if he could keep the *haggadah* for a few days.

After a few days had passed, Rabbi Soloveitchik told him the following: "I have several answers, but the question remains a question," meaning that the answers weren't sufficient to truly resolve the issue. Rabbi Soloveitchik added that he had spent some time looking into other things that the Rebbe wrote in the *haggadah* and said, "I knew that he is a *lamdan*—but I had not imagined that it was to such an extent."¹

Becoming a haggadah reader

“There are two ways of writing a *sefer*,” says one Rosh Yeshiva we interviewed. “Some people want to write a *sefer*, so they find a subject to write their *sefer* on. Then there are people who write *sefarim* with the purpose of guiding people, of bringing clarity to the subject.

“The purpose of writing the *sefer* is expressed in the end result: When the subject matter is a means to an end—writing a *sefer*—then you dramatize everything, you make everything sound big and bold, you bring out the most sophisticated twist. But when you’re trying to help people understand things and bring clarity, then you try making everything as simple as possible for people to understand. Even when the subject becomes more complicated, you try to explain it in the most simple way.

“Rashi is the classic example for this: Rashi’s goal wasn’t to write a *sefer*—he was helping people read *pshat*.

“This is the Rebbe’s *haggadah*. If the Rebbe were to sit down to write a *sefer* on the *haggadah*, he would write and write and never finish. But the Rebbe is helping people read *pshat*; instead of reading many things *about* the *haggadah*, they should become better *haggadah* readers. The *haggadah* is written with such simplicity and clarity—not making things more complicated, rather, to the contrary, making everything more simple.

“I remember a certain *Litvishe* individual who would read many *sefarim* about the *haggadah* as Pesach was approaching—but by the *sefer* he used the Rebbe’s *haggadah*. This is *the* guide to the *sefer*.”

Rabbi Isser Zalman Weisberg says, “The vast majority of *haggados* fit into one of two categories: Most *haggados* are the writers’ own *chiddushim* and explanations on the *haggadah*. Then there are *haggados* that collect everything, all of the *pirushim* on the *haggadah* from the *rishonim* and *acharonim*, without choosing one

over the other. There aren’t that many *haggados* like the Rebbe’s—where the Rebbe carefully chooses each *pirush* and *vort* that he includes.”

Rabbi Tuvia Blau writes,² “The same humility that caused the Alter Rebbe to call his *sefer*, which is the foundation stone of *Toras haChassidus* and the ways of *avodas Hashem*, with the name of *Likkutei Amarim*, as if it’s simply a collection—that same humility caused his successor in *dor hashvi’i*, the Rebbe, to call one of his *sefarim* “*Likkutei Minhagim Vetaamim*,” a collection of customs and reasons.

“From the thousands of *sefarim* that have been produced on the Haggadah Shel Pesach, this *sefer* is, without question, the most rich in content. You will find *everything* you need to know in order to fulfill the many *mitzvos* on the night of the *sefer*, and to fulfill them properly, with complete *hiddur* and enjoyment. And that’s it. In other words: there is nothing missing, and also nothing extra.”

“There is something for everyone in the Rebbe’s *haggadah*,” Rabbi Sholom Spalter says. “Whether you’re a *pashtan*, a *lamdan*, a *darshan*—no matter what type of study you are interested in, *pshat*, *remez*, *drush*, or *sod*—you will enjoy learning the *haggadah*. In more than 40 years, there hasn’t yet been a single year that I haven’t found an amazing *chiddush* in the Rebbe’s *haggadah*. Not a single year!”

In his early review of the *haggadah*, Rabbi Shlomo Yosef Zevin gives a beautiful and succinct description: “This is an amazing *haggadah* and there are few like it; it is appropriate for every Jewish person, Chossid and non-Chossid alike. For every section and line of the *haggadah*, one is provided with the sources in *rishonim* and *poskim* in a concise form, together with the essential laws and *minhagim* that are relevant to that place in the *sefer*, in addition to the relevant explanations collected from the *rishonim* and *acharonim*.”

The Rebbe's first sefer

The *haggadah* has the distinction of being the first *sefer* of the Rebbe that was published. It was first printed in 5706*, as an appendix to the Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch. It has been noted that this is similar to the fact that Pesach was the first subject the Alter Rebbe published a *sefer* on, when he was still studying by the Mezritcher Maggid. It was also one of the first *halachos* published by his sons in Shklov, as the Rebbe notes in the beginning of the *haggadah*.³ In fact, the *haggadah* is really the only original *sefer* the Rebbe wrote and published himself (the only other *sefer* being Hayom Yom, which is a collection from the Frierdiker Rebbe's Torah).

The Rebbe's own use

The Rebbe himself would make much use of the *haggadah*: Both the instructions that the Alter Rebbe wrote when he compiled the *siddur* (and *haggadah*), and the explanations as well.

Rabbi Yisroel Shmotkin related:⁵ “[At the *seder*] the Rebbe would set up the *ka'ara* while standing, and he would recite all of the instructions from the *haggadah* before doing each part. When the Rebbe would recite the first words of the Alter Rebbe's instructions—סדר על שולחנו—he would hold on to the *matzos*. While saying הישראל, he would hold the bottom *matzah* and let it go, then continue with ועליו הלוי, then let the middle one go, and then conclude with the top *matzah*.”

“When it came time for Urchatz,” Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Offen said, “the Rebbe would also read the instructions for Karpas, because one is not supposed to make a *hefsek* after washing. The same would be by the *simanim* of *Matzah*, *Maror* and *Korech*. Before washing his hands, the Rebbe would recite all of the instructions through *Korech*.”

“The Rebbe's *haggadah* was printed in a different format in those days. In those *haggados*,

Now, every *sefer* of the Rebbeim is published under a “*heichal*”: the Baal Shem Tov is *heichal alef*, the Maggid is *heichel beis*, and so on. Each *heichal* has a unique *shaar* (border) on the front page of the *sefarim*, which were chosen by the Frierdiker Rebbe.

When the Rebbe was publishing his first *sefer*, he asked the Frierdiker Rebbe which *shaar* to use. The Frierdiker Rebbe responded: “My father [the Rebbe Rashab] was a *pnimi*, and you are a *pnimi*. It would be fitting that the *haggadah* should have a *shaar* like my father's.”⁴ (All the Rebbe's *sefarim* from then on were published with the Rebbe Rashab's *shaar*.)

the text was printed along an entire page, and then on the next page or two were the *minhagim* and explanations. During the *seder*, we would see the Rebbe recite an entire page quickly, and then while waiting for the *makri* to reach the end of the page, he would peruse the explanations—that he had written—on the next page, as well as look into the *Siddur Ha'Arizal*. When the Rebbe would look back into the *haggadah*, Reb Yankel Katz would already be halfway through the next page. Then, again, the Rebbe would read through the entire page and then go back to the *minhagim*.”



The editions of the haggadah

Rabbi Leibel Shapiro gives us a history of the *haggadah*:

“In 5706*, when the Rebbe’s *haggadah* was first published, the original text of the *haggadah* wasn’t redone: it was copied from the siddur Torah Or, and printed on one side of the page, and the Rebbe’s *pirush* was printed on the other side. (If the Rebbe wrote a lot on a certain topic, then there were two pages of *pirushim* in a row.)



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“In 5717*, the Rebbe wrote *hosafos* on the *haggadah*, and a small, three-page booklet was published.

“In 5723*, which marked 150 years from the *histalkus* of the Alter Rebbe, the Rebbe wrote more *hosafos*, and these were basically pieces that were connected to the Alter Rebbe. Eventually, these were published in a single sefer: the original *haggadah*, with two sets of *hosafos* in the back.

“Over the years, many *sichos* of the Rebbe on the *haggadah* were published, e.g. the *sichos* on the second night of Pesach, Parshas Va’eira, Bo, and so on. (At one point they were collected by the *bochurim* and published in a booklet.)

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“In 5733*, the members of Vaad Lehafatzas Sichos decided that perhaps a new edition of the *haggadah* should be printed. This proposed edition would be different in several ways:

- The *hosafos* that the Rebbe wrote later would be inserted into the *haggadah* itself, in every place where it belonged.
- The *haggadah* itself would be reformatted, with the *haggadah* on top and the Rebbe’s *pirush* on the bottom.
- It would include all the Rebbe’s *mugadlike sichos* on the *haggadah*, as well as the *michtavim kloli'im* for Pesach.
- It would be renamed from הגדה עם לקוטי טעמים to הגדה עם לקוטי מנהגים וטעמים וביאורים.

“We asked the Rebbe whether we should do this. On the general idea, the Rebbe answered that someone should review it very

well. The Rebbe also agreed to the formatting of the *haggadah* as well as the new name.

“As an aside, the new edition of the *haggadah* was published for Pesach with thousands of copies, and one copy was, of course, given to the Rebbe. The final words of the *sefer* were a footnote on a *hadran*, which was discussing why we don’t say *shehecheyanu* at a *bris mila*, and it concluded with the words *mishum tzaara deyinuka*—that *shehecheyanu* is not recited “because of the pain of the infant.” When the Rebbe saw that these were the last words—with their negative content—the Rebbe wrote that we should make a rubber stamp with the words “*Leshana haba’a b’Yerushalayim*,” and stamp it into every single *sefer*. This is because of the rule of מסיימים בטוב, that one should always conclude on a positive note. (As we saw in other instances as well, the Rebbe was always very particular about this.) So we went on to stamp each one of the thousands of *sefarim*.”



Accessible – with unlimited depth

There are two distinct lenses through which the Rebbe's *haggadah* can be viewed. Just as Rashi is fundamentally a simple explanation created for the five-year-old child, the Rebbe's *haggadah* illuminates each part of the *haggadah* in the simplest and most succinct way possible, guiding you along as it gives you sources for everything that you read, practical pointers for what to do, *vertelach* in Chassidus and Kabbalah, and tidbits of explanation that resolve any major questions on the way. Like Rashi, the language in the *haggadah* is concise, clear, and to the point. You don't have to be a scholar to study and enjoy the Rebbe's *haggadah*, and it is accessible to all.

Then there's a deeper layer. If you learn the *haggadah* more diligently, looking up the sources and comparing it to explanations in other *haggados*, two things will happen: first you will discover that not everything is as simple as it appears. You will realize that for every explanation the Rebbe cites, there are plenty more that he didn't, that certain passages are difficult to understand at face value, and that there even seem to be contradictions from one part of the *haggadah* to another. But, eventually, by digging beneath the surface, one discovers the true depth.

Fascinating facts from the Rebbe's haggadah

Fit it into the poem

In the *simanim* of the *seder*, ורחץ is the only one that has a *vov*, “and wash.”

Why?

This is so that each *siman* should have two syllables: *ka-desh*, *u-rchatz*, *kar-pas*, etc. (The Rebbe goes on to quote other reasons as well, including a Kabbalistic explanation from his father.)

In limbo

Shefoch chamascha, when we open the door for Eliyahu Hanovi, is the only part of the *seder* that is not included in any of the 15 sections of the *seder*. *Beirach*—bentching—finishes before “*Shefoch chamascha*” and *Hallel-Nirtza* begins after it.

Hei Lachma Anya in Yiddish?

Today we only translate the *ma nishtana* into Yiddish, but the ancient custom was to translate both *Hei Lachma Anya* and the *ma nishtana* into the local language, and there were those who

translated *avadim hayinu* as well. The Rebbe explains why our custom is different.⁶

The floating possuk

The *possuk* “*Vaereich misboseses bidamayich*” is unique: It's located in a section of the *haggadah* that is quoted directly from the *Sifri*, and if you didn't know better you'd think that the *possuk* comes from the *Sifri* as well, but it was in fact added later on by the authors of the *haggadah*. The various *nuschaos* of the *haggadah* inserted it in different places, and the Rebbe explains why the Alter Rebbe included it into the spot that he did.⁷

Utter precision

In the *haggadah*, the Alter Rebbe wrote short instructions. The Rebbe pays tremendous attention to every detail—to the extent that, in one place, he asks why the Alter Rebbe sometimes writes “and then” (ואח"כ) you should do something, while at other times he writes, “and” do something.

The meaning of כמה שנאמר

In the vast majority of Jewish literature, the term כמו שנאמר means that we are citing a *possuk* as a proof to what we are saying. But when the author of the *haggadah* writes כמה שנאמר, he might be bringing a *possuk* as a proof or he may be bringing it for more elaboration.⁸

Would it really be enough?

The message of the *Dayenu* is to emphasize how great Hashem's kindnesses are to us, and that even if He only did this for us—*dayenu*, it would be enough. But there are several strange stanzas:

If He had given us their wealth, and had not split the sea for us—dayenu. Would it really be enough if we had perished at the sea?

If He had drowned our oppressors in it, and had not supplied our needs in the desert for 40 years—dayenu. Would it truly be enough had we died in the desert?

If He had brought us before Har Sinai, and had not given us the Torah—dayenu. What's the value of coming to Har Sinai without receiving the Torah?

These are questions asked by *mefarshim*, and the Rebbe gives beautiful original explanations for each one of them.⁹

Why the Kabbalah?

When the Alter Rebbe wrote the *haggadah* (as part of the *siddur*), his goal was to create something that was accessible to everyone, and although much of it is based on Kabbalah, there are only two times that he actually includes the Kabbalistic *kavanos* that one should have in mind:

By the pouring of the wine into the broken vessel, the Alter Rebbe writes that one must have in mind that the cup is *malchus* and it is pouring into a the broken vessel of *kelipa*. The Rebbe explains that he was forced to break from his practice because there is a *halachic* reasoning for why one must have this specific *kavana* at this point (see there).¹⁰

In the *Hodu... ki le'olam chasdo*, the Alter Rebbe included the *yud-kei-vov-kei* that one

should have in mind throughout the recitation. This shows us that this is a *kavana* that is relevant to everyone.¹¹

Where are the brachos?

Generally, every mitzvah that we perform is accompanied with a *bracha*. On the night of the *seder*, however, we do not recite a *bracha* for many of the *mitzvos* that we perform: When we drink the four cups, for example, we do not recite a *bracha* “*al shesiyas daled kosos*”—although, of course, we do recite the *borei peri hagafen*. The same is true regarding the mitzvah of recounting *yetzias Mitzrayim*, eating the *charoses*, and more.

The Rebbe brings explanations for each one as they come up:

No bracha on the four cups - The four cups constitute one single mitzvah that is divided into the drinking of four cups. Being that we drink them throughout the *seder*, and we will make interruptions before we finish all four of them, we cannot make a *bracha* in the beginning for the entire mitzvah.¹²

No bracha on the retelling of yetzias Mitzrayim - This question was the subject of a fascinating generational story of the Rabbeim, with each Rebbe asking his child for an answer to this question, all the way back to the Alter Rebbe.¹³ The Rebbe brings down several other answers as well from *rishonim* and *acharonim*.¹⁴

No bracha on Hallel - Because its recital is split in half; or because it's like reading the Torah.¹⁵

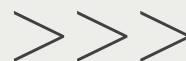
No bracha on charoses - Because the *charoses* was instituted as an addition to *marror* and therefore does not get a *bracha* for itself: the *marror* represents the bitterness of difficult work, while the *charoses* symbolizes just how difficult the work was—with mortar, for “there is no work as difficult as the work with mortar.”¹⁶ This explanation, which was developed by the Rebbe himself, is the subject of much discussion among scholars.¹⁷

Careful Examination

Obviously, in order to truly appreciate the depth of the Rebbe's commentary on the *haggadah*, you need to study and carefully examine the Rebbe's words in their entirety. We hope that this overview will encourage our readers to actually peruse the Rebbe's words and

appreciate the Rebbe's novel approach to the text of the *Haggadah Shel Pesach*. In this spirit, we have included another section below, based on our conversations with individuals who toiled over the Rebbe's haggadah and shared with us their findings.

A Taste of **The** **Rebbe's** **Haggadah**



Indefinable

People have tried to characterize or define the Rebbe's *haggadah*. But, in truth, that is an impossible endeavor. As one of the *roshei yeshivos* we interviewed commented: "Try to define Talmud Bavli. You can't! The only way to have a taste of Gemara is by going ahead and learning it, in depth. You cannot define the Rebbe's Torah—you can only know it by experiencing it."

However, in order to provide a taste of the depth that can be discovered, we have collected a few short explanations from scholars who are experts on the Rebbe's *haggadah*. It should be noted that these have been boiled down to their most fundamental points, and in some

cases we were only able to include references of the explanations themselves. To gain a real comprehension, they should be read in their original form. This is not a representative sample of the *sugyos* that are written on each passage of the *haggadah*; it is a mostly random selection of a few pieces that we felt may interest our readers.

We hope that this will provide some inspiration to learn the Rebbe's *haggadah*—every individual on his own level—whether that means opening it up and studying it on its own, which in itself is a fascinating learning experience; or on a deeper realm, by studying the sources and uncovering more and more insight.

Who created the *haggadah* of today?

סדר הגדה. ראה במשנה פסחים פ"י, מכילתא פ' בא, תלמוד בבלי וירושלמי שם וכו'. סדר הגדה בצורה קבועה נמצא כבר בסידור ר' עמרם גאון, סי' רס"ג, ברמב"ם, מחזור ויטרי ועוד, הביאור ע"ד הסוד בפע"ה וסי' האריו"ל.

Rabbi Isser Zalman Weisberg says: "Let's focus on just one line in this passage: The Rebbe brings four sources for the *haggadah* as a set *nusach*: Rav Amram Gaon, the Siddur Rasag, the Rambam, the Machzor Vitri, 'and more.'



RABBI ISSER
ZALMAN WEISBERG

"This isn't just a random list: these are the four original prototypes of the *haggadah*; all the many versions of the *haggadah* that have been published since are based on them. The period of the *geonim* extended over about 450 years after the end of the *amoraim* and *sevaraim*, and there were approximately 90 *geonim* during that period. Rav Amram Gaon was the 26th *gaon* of Sura. In response to a request from the elders of a community in Spain, he wrote up the text of the *siddur* and *haggadah*. This is the first *siddur* and *haggadah* that we have. (The reason that the

siddur wasn't written until then is beyond the scope of this article, but it is connected to the fact that *Torah shebaal peh* in general wasn't always written down, and, even at that time, there was much hesitation to write things.) Every *siddur* that we have today—Sefard, Ashkenaz, etc.—is based on this *siddur*.

"Rav Saadia Gaon became the *rosh yeshiva* in Sura 56 years after Rav Amram Gaon. Rav Saadia Gaon authored an enormous amount of *sefarim*; on *Torah shebiksav*, *Torah shebaal peh*, *halacha*, *dikduk*, *hashkafa*, and even *chachmos chitzoniyos* (this was because there were many challenges to Yiddishkeit in his generation from opposing philosophies). Among his many *sefarim*, he wrote a *siddur* and *haggadah*.

"The third source is the Machzor Vitri, which was authored by a student and *mehutan* of Rashi, and it includes many of Rashi's rulings and

minhagim. The fourth source the Rebbe brings is the Rambam.

“It’s interesting to note that the Rebbe lists the Rambam before the Machzor Vitri, even though the Machzor Vitri was written 100 years before the Rambam.

“This is because the Rambam is a more authoritative source than the Machzor Vitri. In general, although Rashi and the Rambam are considered two of the greatest *rishonim*, Rashi is considered more of a *parshan*, a commentator, while the Rambam is a *posek* par excellence. So when it comes to deciding the text of the *haggadah*, the Rambam comes before the Machzor Vitri. We see this throughout the *haggadah*: sometimes the Rebbe will bring sources chronologically, in the order in which they were written, and sometimes he will list them according to importance.

“Now, every word in the Rebbe’s *haggadah* is exact. What does the Rebbe mean by “*ve’od*—and more”? The Rebbe must be saying that there is another source (or sources), yet it does not warrant explicit mention. There is no way of knowing for sure, but I think that the Rebbe may be referring to a *haggadah* that was discovered in the Cairo Geniza, which is a massive collection of ancient manuscripts and documents that was left untouched for centuries in the Ezra shul in Fostat, Egypt, and is considered to be one of the greatest discoveries of manuscripts ever. This *haggadah* dates back to the times of the *geonim*. Although it is quite different than the version that we have today, it is a very early text of the *haggadah*, and this might be what the Rebbe is referring to.”

A Rashi that was long misunderstood

קוראין את ההלל-הלויים (תוספתא פסחים, ספ"ד)

After Mincha on Erev Pesach, we read a description of the *Korban Pesach* in the *Beis Hamikdash*. In the description, it tells us that as the Yidden were slaughtering the animals and bringing them to the *mizbe'ach*, “Hallel was read.” The Rebbe adds a very short note—quoting the *tosefta*—that the Levi'im were the ones who were reading the Hallel.

This four-word comment is one of the most famous *sugyos* in the Rebbe’s *haggadah*. It began with a letter from Rabbi Zevin, who asked the Rebbe (among other things) why he had omitted the opinion of Rashi on the subject, that Hallel was recited by the Yisrael, not the Levi'im. In two fascinating letters,¹⁸ the Rebbe explains at length that the opinion of Rashi had been misunderstood, and that although a superficial

reading may leave a different impression, Rashi had never meant to deviate from the *tosefta* and say that the Hallel was read by the Yisrael.

It is interesting to note that in this issue the Rebbe stands against the commonly accepted version of many *acharonim*, including the Meleches Shlomo, the Mahari Kurkus, the Minchas Chinuch, the Rogatchover, and others.



RABBI SHLOMO
YOSEF ZEVIN

JEM 284219



THE REBBE'S HANDWRITTEN RESPONSE TO RABBI SHLOMO YOSEF ZEVIN'S QUESTION ON THE REBBE'S HAGADDAH, DATED TZOM GEDALYA 5706.

What does Haggadah mean?

השם "הגדה" - בפסחים (קטו, ב). הגדה ע"ש והגדת לבנך, וי"מ הגדה שהוא ל' הודאה ושבה להקב"ה על שהוציאנו מארמ"צ כמו שמתרגם בירושלמי הגדתי היום לד' אלקיך שבחית יומא דין. וכן תרגמו ר' סעדי' בערבי (אבודרהם). ויש גורסין אגדה באל"ף (ראה ד"ס לפסחים קטו-קטז. תוד"ה אמר ע"ז מה, א. ובכמה ראשונים).

The origin of the name "*Haggadah*":

As mentioned above, the Rebbe selected the *pirushim* on the *haggadah* from among many *rishonim* and *acharonim*, and he left many explanations out. Sometimes, he brings only one explanation when many others exist. From the Rebbe's correspondences, we see that this was done with tremendous precision, and that if something was omitted, there was a very good reason for it.

For example: Around the time that the Rebbe's *haggadah* was published, Dr. Aharon Hilman was writing articles in Sinai Magazine about the *haggadah*, and he included his notes on the Rebbe's *haggadah*.

One of them was regarding the name "Haggadah Shel Pesach." The Rebbe cites three explanations for the name "*haggadah*," but Dr. Hilman felt that there was a better explanation: As the Rebbe himself notes multiple times, most

of the *haggadah* is built as a *midrash* on *pesukim*; hence the name "*haggadah*"—the *midrash*—of Pesach.

In a letter,¹⁹ the Rebbe responded to him that this was difficult to accept: According to this explanation, the term only applies to one section of the *haggadah*—from *Avadim Hayinu* until *Venomar lefanav halleluka*—and, the Rebbe says, that is not what it seems from *rishonim* and *acharonim*. The implication is that the **entire** *haggadah* is called "the *haggadah*," not only the section that explains *pesukim*.

(Dr. Hilman also felt that the Rebbe had missed a better explanation for why the four cups of wine isn't included in the *ma nishtana*, and there, too, the Rebbe responded that his explanation wasn't sufficient.)

From these letters and others, we see how much precision the Rebbe invested in every word of the *haggadah* and also in what he had left out.

Three matzos – halacha or midrash?

בג' מצות-שאלו אנשי קירואן למר רב שרירא גאון למה לוקחין ג' מצות בלילי פסחים לא פחות ולא יותר, והשיב להם רמז מן התורה הוא לג' סאין שאמר אברהם לשרה לעשות מהם עוגות כו', וגמירי אותו זמן פסח הי'. וי"א זכר לג' הררי עולם אברהם יצחק ויעקב (מעשה רוקח טז, נה).

About the need for three matzos, the Rebbe quotes reasons that seem more symbolic in nature—to remind us of the three measurements of flour used by Avraham Avinu or the three *avos*.

To the layman this may seem like a very simple piece, but someone who has familiarity with *hilchos Pesach* will immediately be struck by a powerful question: There's a simple, halachic

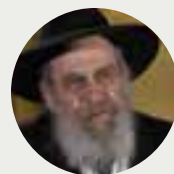
reason why three *matzos* are needed at the night of the *seder*: Two are needed because a person is obligated to make the *bracha* of *hamotzi* on two whole matzos—just as on any other Yom Tov night—and the third is required in order to have a broken matzah as *lechem oni*—bread of affliction. Why does the Rebbe look for symbolic reasons when there is such a simple reasoning?

This question was originally posed in the *Bit'achon Chabad* magazine. Rabbi Ezra Schochet from Los Angeles suggested an answer, and, to put it very briefly, he explains²⁰ that we are dealing with two distinct issues here: 1) The objects that a person needs on his *kaara* during the *seder* when he reads the *haggadah*, and 2) the obligations that he has to *perform* later on throughout the *seder* (like eating the matzah, eating the *maror*, and so on).

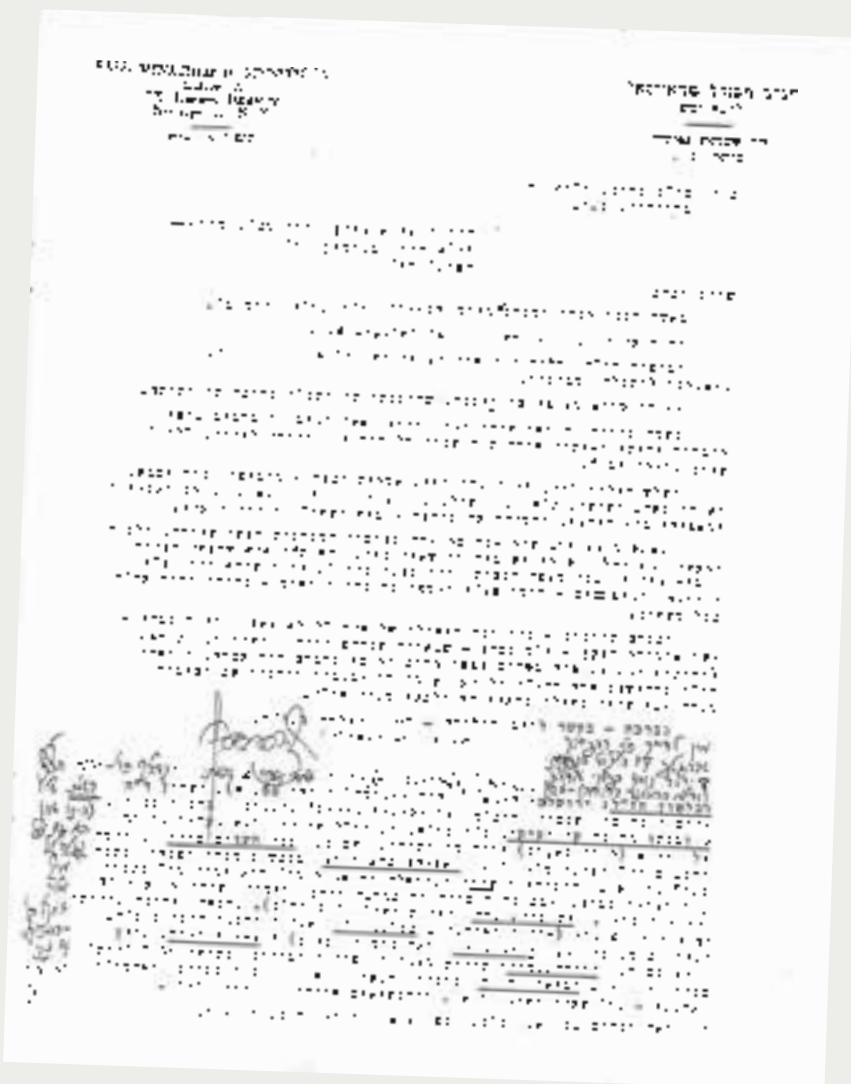
These are not the same thing. Just because something must be used at one point during the night, it doesn't mean that it must be on the *kaara*.

So the Rebbe couldn't bring the halachic reason for three matzos—two for *lechem mishneh* and one for a broken matzah—because that only explains why three matzos will eventually be needed during

the *seder*, not why it must be on the *kaara* throughout the recital of the *haggadah*. (Indeed, the Rambam only says to bring *one* matza to the *seder* table—because, in his opinion, it's not needed on the *kaara*.) In order to explain why it needs to be on the *kaara*, the Rebbe brings the reason of Rav Sherira Gaon. Using this logic, Rabbi Schochet goes on to explain many passages of *rishonim* and *acharonim*, see there.



RABBI EZRA
SCHOCHET



A HANDWRITTEN POSTSCRIPT IN THE REBBE'S KSAV YAD KODESH TO RABBI EZRA SCHOCHET ABOUT HIS STUDIES IN THE REBBE'S HAGADDAH.

Is the Kiddush on Pesach special?

קדש - בכל יו"ט חייב בקידוש מדברי סופרים, וכשהל בשבת יש לו גם עיקר מן התורה - מוסיף עליהם בלילה זה, שהוא אחד מארבעה כוסות שהן מצוה מד"ם בליל פסח. ולכן: א) אינו מקדש על הפת. ב) אין אחר מוציא אותו ידי חובתו (שו"ע רבינו סתע"ב סכ"ב). ג) דוחק עצמו לשתות ד' כוסות אף שמזיקו או שצריך למכור כסותו (נדרים מט, ב. פסחים צט, ב). ד) אינו מקדש אלא בלילה ממש ולא בתוספת יו"ט (תה"ד סקל"ז), כי תקנו חכמים ד' כוסות בזמן הראוי לאכילת מצה (שו"ע רבינו שם ס"ב). ה) יש לחוש לדעת אלו האומרים שמצוה לשתות כל הכוס ועכ"פ רובו (שם סי"ט).

On the night of the *seder*, *kiddush* is recited over the first of the four cups of wine. For this reason, *kiddush* on this night has different laws than a regular Shabbos or Yom Tov, and the Rebbe lists five differences.

But the problem is that there there seem to be at least three additional significant differences that the Rebbe *doesn't* include: 1) On the night of the *seder*, the wine of *kiddush* must be drunk while reclining; 2) It must be done with wine that is diluted with water; and 3) It must be done specifically with red wine.

Based on this and other *diyukim* in this passage, Rabbi Schochet²¹ suggests that the Rebbe isn't simply pointing out the practical differences between *kiddush* of Pesach night and the rest of the year, because *kiddush happens to coincide* with the four cups of wine—rather, he's choosing differences that are related to the fundamental *nature of kiddush* on the night of the *seder*. (The explanation itself is quite complex, see there for the explanation.)

The possuk that was missing for over a thousand years

ויעבדו מצרים את בני ישראל בפרך: וימררו את חייהם בעבדה קשה בחמר ובלבנים ובכל עבדה בשדה את כל עבדתם אשר עבדו בהם בפרך: (שמות א, יג-יד).

In the Alter Rebbe's *haggadah*, both of these *pesukim* are cited in full. In almost all the other *nuschaos* that the Rebbe checked, he did not find anyone who brings the second *possuk* as well.

A major point of focus of the Rebbe's *haggadah* is to explain the Alter Rebbe version of the *haggadah* (and there are some scholars who

argue that this was in fact the Rebbe's only focus in writing it).

The above is one significant example of this. The Rebbe is explaining how it's possible that, for over a thousand years (!), a *possuk* had been lost in all of the *haggados* used throughout the Jewish world.



THE REBBE'S EDITS ON HIS HAGGADAH.

The Rebbe's explanation is two-pronged: First, he explains that this *possuk* is so crucial to the description of *galus Mitzrayim* that it's impossible that (the Sifri and the) author of the *haggadah* didn't include it. If you're trying to describe the backbreaking work that the Yidden were forced to endure in Mitzrayim, how can you omit the very *possuk* that describes it in detail?!

But that still leaves a powerful question: If we cannot find a single *haggadah* in history that included this *possuk*, isn't that the biggest proof that it was never included?

To answer this question, the Rebbe helps us imagine how the *haggadah* was transmitted through the generations. In the beginning, the *haggadah* was written and copied by hand. When you copy things by hand, you often try to keep things as brief as possible. In order to keep this piece short, the copier of the text copied the first and last words of these two *pesukim*.

So this paragraph -

”ויעבדו מצריים את-בני ישראל,
בפרך. ” וימררו את-חיהם בעבודה

קשה, בחומר ובלבנים, ובכל-עבודה,
 בשדה--את, כל-עבודתם, אשר-עבדו
 בהם, בפרך.

Became this line -

ויעבדו מצרים גו' בפרך.

But there was only one problem. Look again: that same shorthand could also be used if you were copying the first *possuk* on its own. **ויעבדו** **בפרך**, מצריים את-בני ישראל.

Some very early scribes indeed made this very mistake, and believed that the abbreviation was referring only to the first *possuk*. This mistake was then copied throughout all the later editions of the *haggadah*, and it was more than a thousand years before the Alter Rebbe returned the *possuk* back to its rightful place. ❶

1. Taken from “Reb Avraham Hirsh” p. 49-50.
2. Bitaan Chabad vol. 21 p. 21.
3. Rabbi Avraham Alashvili.
4. Yemei Temimim vol. 2 p. 797.
5. See Derher Nissan 5776, “*The Rebbe's Seder*,” p. 50-51.
6. הא לחמא 12 P.
7. ואעבור עליך 22 P.
8. במתי מעט כמה שנאמר 22 P.
9. 28-29 P.
10. ויכוון 25 P.
11. 'הודו לה' גו 47 P.
12. ד' כוסות. 8 P.
13. מצוה עלינו לספר ביצי"מ 15 P.
14. מצוה עלינו לספר ביצי"מ 15 P.
15. הללו' הללו-למענו מים 32 P.
16. ברכה זו. 35 P.
17. See e.g. Kovetz Hayovel vol. 1 p. 92
18. Igros Kodesh vol. 2 p. 241-243, 260-264.
19. Igros Kodesh vol. 2 p. 364
20. Later published in Migdal Or vol. 9 p. 464ff.
21. Kovetz Migdal Or p. 476.