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THE PASSOVER HAGGADAH AS PaRaDiSe*

The Torah, Rabbi Yan'ai explains, has numerous faces; it speaks to each man "in accordance with his capacity."[1] The ten commandments are addressed, therefore, not to the group, but to each individual, "I am the Lord *thy* God (אלהיך-singular).[2] The Passover Haggadah, too, speaks on many levels. The range of meanings one discerns in the rubrics, symbols and ceremonies, the depth of the experience that the Seder ritual evokes, depend largely on the knowledge, perception and sensitivity of the participant.

I

The *Peshat*

The clear and obvious purpose of the Seder—the *peshat*—is didactic. The Haggadah is a detailed lesson plan with precise instructions.

A. The goal of the lesson: To teach and thus to perpetuate a significant —perhaps the central—event of Jewish historic experience, the exodus from slavery in Egypt. This overall aim is clearly defined in the earliest literary sources, "You shall therefore keep this ordinance at its set time from year to year" as a "reminder"—זכרון;[3] "and you shall explain to your son . . .";[4] "And, when in time to come, your son asks you, saying, 'What does this mean?" you shall say to him, 'It was with a mighty hand that the Lord brought us out of Egypt, from the house of bondage. "[5]

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* PaRDeS (Paradise) is a mnemonic for the four types of exegesis: *Peshat, Remez, Derush, Sod*. cf. Zohar III, p. 110a; I, 26b; P. Sandler, "Leba'ayat Pardes etc.", *Sepher Urbach*, Jerusalem, 1955, pp. 222-235; G. Scholem, "The Meaning of the Torah in Jewish Mysticism," *Diogenes*, XIV, 1956, pp. 36-47; XV, 65-116; also W. Bacher, "L'Exegese Biblique dans le Zohar, *Revue Et. Juive*, XXII, 1891, pp. 33-46.

[1] Pesikta Rabbati (ed. Friedmann) XXI, p. 101a, and numerous parallels cited in notes 36f. The comment is on Deut. V. 5, "Face to face the Lord spoke to you . . ." which the Rabbis translate, "With numerous faces, meanings . . ." The Rabbis conclude, on the basis of Song of Songs, II.4, that each Biblical statement contains forty nine possible sets of alternatives (the numerical value of דגלו).

[2] Pesikta Kahana XII, p. 110a. cf. Mekhilta, Bahodesh IX (ed. Lauterbach, vol. II, p. 267), "Each man hears in accordance with his capacity . . ."; Exod.Rabb. XXIX.1, ". . . the youth, the aged and the children, each group in accordance with their capacities"; Yoma 75b; Tanhuma, Shemot XXV; Exod.Rabb. V.9, XXV.3, XXXIV.1.

[3] Exodus XIII.10 and 9.

[4] Exodus XIII.8.

[5] Exodus XIII.14. Cf. Deut. VI.20.

B. Methods of instruction: Discussion, lecture, dramatic dialogue, role play, projects, games and songs. Questions prescribed by the text, spontaneous questions, and discussion by the group; responsive and unison readings; assuming the role of one of the four sons and—in recent centuries—the role of Elijah; opening of the door and the greeting addressed to the prophet of redemption; the pouring and the drinking of the four (or five) cups; the "sandwich" of Hillel; the preparation and eating of Haroses and bitter herbs; the festive meal; the drops of wine (sixteen) dipped or poured from the cup; the distribution of the 'Aphikoman after the meal, etc.

C. Motivations—Extrinsic: Follow instructions of the Tosephta,[6] " . . . amuse the children by snatching the matzah from each other so that the children shall not fall asleep"[7]; or Palestinian and Babylonian Talmud, ". . . a man is obliged to cause his wife and children to rejoice on the festival. With what does he make them rejoice? . . . Women with what is suitable for them and minors with what is suitable for them. . ."[8] Maimonides summarizes, "One is required to innovate (make changes) on this night so that the children will see and ask questions . . . One should distribute to them parched ears of corn and nuts, lift the plate (table) from before them, snatch the matzah, one from the other, and similar things. . ."[9] Emulate the great R. Akiba by beginning the Seder early[10] and not making it overly long so that the children will keep awake. Include popular ballads and games like "Who knows one? and "*Had Gadya*," even though they are from non-Jewish sources, as the post-fifteenth century Jews in Germany did, and as was the practice in other localities throughout the ages, to motivate, amuse and interest the children.[11]

D. Motivations—Intrinsic: The preparations for the Seder as early as "thirty days before the festival"[12]; "the Great Sabbath" preceding Passover;[13] searching for and destroying the leaven (*Bedikat and Bi'ur Hametz*); the mood of the ceremony, its drama and movement; the symbols, actions, formulas, allusions and rich associations create an atmosphere for a significant, enjoyable, festive and happy family celebration.

E. Illustrations—multiple sense appeal—audio-visual aids: Symbols on the Seder Plate prominently displayed at the appropriate moments in the service; the chants and songs; illuminated Haggadahs (from the fourteenth (13th?) century onward);[14] art work of the Seder Plate, wine cups, cup of Elijah, embroidered matzah covers, etc.

F. The group: To be kept small—family, friends and a few guests; the atmosphere—warm and intimate; the relationship of instructor to pupil—informal, unstructured, with frequent reversal of roles.

G. The Text: The liturgy of the Seder is not to be, nor has it traditionally been considered as rigidly formal and fixed—an absolutely defined ritual, from which one must not deviate. On the contrary, many of the rubrics are brief, general statements of the order of procedure which encourage creativity and imaginative improvisation. Directions for the Seder observance—found in the earliest strata of Rabbinic Literature and preserved in the standard published texts of the Haggadah—are often stated in the most general terms, like, "According to the understanding of the son, the father teaches him.";[15] or, "Begin with derogation and end with praise.";[16] or, "The more one tells of the exodus from Egypt, the more praiseworthy is he."[17] The ancient manuscripts of the Haggadah[18] and, to an even greater extent, the description of the cus-

[6] Tos. Pes. X.9.

[7] I translate with S. Lieberman, *Tosephta Kifshuta*, vol. IV, p. 653. cf. Pes. 109a.

[8] Yer. Pes. X.1 (37b) and Pes. 109a. cf. Lieberman, *Yerushalmi Kifshuta*, p. 517.

[9] Hil. Hametz Umatzah VII.3.

[10] Pes. 109a.

[11] See, E. D. Goldschmidt, *Haggadah shel Pesah Wetoldoteiha*, Bialik Institute, Jerusalem, 1960, p. 98. A number of other customs were originally introduced to arouse the interest of the children, and only subsequent generations attributed to them weightier, religious significance.

[12] Pes. 6a; Meg. 29b; Sanhedrin 12b; Av. Zar. 5b; Tosephta Meg. III.2.

[13] See, M. Kasher, *Haggadah Shelemah*, Jerusalem, 1955, pp. 50f. He cites all the sources for *Shabbat Haggadol*. S. Zeitlin, "The First Night of Passover," *Jew. Quar. Rev.*, Vol. XXXVIII, No. 4, pp. 457ff., traces the origin of *Shabbat Haggadol* to a much earlier, pre-Christian date, primarily on the basis of John XIX.31. His analysis is far fetched and unconvincing.

[14] For selected bibliography and some of the problems of illuminated Haggadahs, see the fine study by Joseph Gutmann, in *Studies in Bibliography and Booklore*, vol. VII, Nos. 1-4, 1965, pp. 3ff.

[15] Mish. Pes. X.4. It is likely that even "the questions" were originally only a guide of the order in which the father shall teach his son—and not intended as a fixed text to be recited by the child or adult. cf. Pes. 115b.

[16] *ibid.*

[17] This precise formulation appears in no source except the Passover Haggadah. cf. Kasher, *op. cit.* p. 15 (of the Haggadah text), note 70, and Goldschmidt, *Seder Haggadah*, Schocken, Tel Aviv, 1947, p. 31.

[18] See, for example, the Dropsie College MS, faithfully reproduced, with notes under the heading, "The Oldest Haggadah in Our Possession," by D. Goldschmidt.

toms, prayers, selections from Biblical and Rabbinical Literature, scattered throughout the tannaitic, amoraic, gaonic sources and beyond, all vary in numerous significant details. Poems, hymns, ballads, midrashic passages were added or deleted by different rites as late as the 17th and 18th centuries.

The overall goal of "telling" the story of the redemption; does not, however, exhaust the full intent of the compilers of the Haggadah, even on the level of the *Peshat*—as a teaching manual. Nor is the message of the Haggadah intended only for children. In addition to the central lesson, each section of the traditional Seder liturgy has its specific objectives—some explicit, and some more subtle—of varying degrees of profundity.

In the process of "telling" (מגיד), for example, the group—guided by the text, leader and each other—explores the nature of slavery. Is it a physical, material, socio-economic condition, determined by outer circumstance—"We were Pharaoh's slaves in Egypt. . . ."[19]; or is slavery primarily an inner, psychic, spiritual state—"Our fathers were idol worshippers. . . ."?[20] Is the initial movement toward freedom, "Out of Egypt"—physical, economic, political liberation; or is the primary propelling force the vision of and commitment to "Sinai," ". . . that they may serve Me."?[21] Which aspect takes precedence; or are they in a spiraling, dialectical relationship, inextricably intertwined, so that the

[19] Deut. VI.21, 26, 8 quoted somewhat freely in the Haggadah, a not infrequent occurrence when Biblical verses are included in the liturgy. The recitation of this Biblical section is required by the early third century 'Amora, Mar Samuel. cf. Goldschmidt, *op. cit.*, p. 16 (especially note 9) and his *Seder Haggadah shel Pesah*, p. 30.

[20] The beginning of the account of liberation according to Rav (so the majority and most reliable mss. of Pes. 116a). cf. S. Z. Rabinowitz, *Diddukei Sopherim*, Pes. p. 361. M. M. Kasher, *Haggadah Shelemah*, Jerusalem, 1954, pp. 19ff., and 30ff. cites and compares all the mss. as well as versions quoted by the Gaonim and Rishonim.

[21] Ex. X.3. It is of interest that the Zohar views Passover, Shavuot and the forty nine intervening days as a unified process. Israel's liberation from the powers of defilement (כוחות הטומאה) and from the dominion of the demonic (סטרא אחרא) on Passover was temporary and incomplete. In the imagery of the Zohar: On Passover Israel was only circumcized (מילה) but the corona, "the sign of the holy covenant," was uncovered (פריעה) only in the desert (Zohar III.95b). Full liberation was achieved only on the festival of Weeks. In the symbolic language of Zohar: After Israel's "menstrual flow ceased," on the Passover, she "must count seven clean days (Lev. XV.28)," the seven weeks until Shavuot, and only then is she ready for "union with the king (one of the Sephirot) and for receiving the Torah"—on Shavuot (III.97b). cf. I. Tishby, *Mishnat Hazohar*, Mosad Bialik, 1961, vol. II, pp. 510 and 512f.

liberator and the would be liberated need to battle against both, the outer and inner powers of enslavement, simultaneously, if they are to set themselves on the path to freedom?[22]

Characteristically, the traditional Haggadah, certainly since the fourth century and most probably since early tannaitic times,[23] includes both the exodus from physical enslavement and the spiritual liberation from idolatry. Even more typical of the Jewish continuum, is the subtle emphasis in beginning the story of the liberation not with the idolatry of Terah, the father of Abraham[24]—the true beginning—but with, "We were slaves unto Pharaoh in Egypt. . . ." The Haggadah, since the days of Mar Samuel in the early third century, reaffirms the typically Jewish, non-utopian, practical idealism—realistic, attainable, here and now—which insists that the environmental, social deterrents to freedom must be mitigated before the inner, spiritual liberation can become even a partially realizable goal.

[22] Recall the Rabbinic explanation of the law concerning the slave who refuses his freedom (Ex. 21.5f.) His ear is pierced, R. Yohanan b. Zaccai explains, "Because he heard at Sinai, 'For it is to Me that the Israelites are servants; they are My servants . . . (Lev. XXV.55),' and not servants of servants . . . The slave substitutes a human yoke for that of God . . . He disregards that which he heard." Thus the true liberation is experienced at Sinai (on Shavuot). R. Simon b. Lakish, however, stresses the fact that the slave's ear is pierced at "the door or doorpost" (Ex. XXI.6) —the two witnesses to God's bringing Israel to freedom from slavery in Egypt (see, Ex. XII.21). The central experience of liberation is therefore, according to R. Simon, the exodus. See, Kiddushin 22b, Yer. Kid. I.2 (59d) and Tosephta Bav.Kam. VII.5.

[23] Both aspects are implied in the midrash on Deut. XXVI.5f., referred to in the Mishna (Pes. X.4)—certainly one of the most ancient parts of the Seder service, though not as old as L. Finkelstein would make it (pre-Maccabean) in his highly imaginative study in the *Harvard Theol. Rev.*, vol. XXXI, 1938, pp. 291ff. The earliest reference to this midrash is in the Mishnah. No mention or allusion to a fixed Seder liturgy is to be found in any Hellenistic Jewish source. cf. S. Stein, "The Influence of Symposia Literature on the Literary Form of the Pesah Haggadah," *The Journal of Jewish Studies*, vol. VIII, nos. 1 and 2, 1957, p. 15; J. B. Segal, *The Hebrew Passover*, Oxford Univ. Press, London, 1963, pp. 241 and 8ff. and S. Zeitlin, "The Liturgy of the First Night of Passover," *Jew. Quar. Rev.*, vol. XXXVIII, no. 4, April 1948, pp. 444ff., especially note 282. It is more than likely that the two passages required by Rav and Mar Samuel (see, notes 19 and 20, above) which make both aspects of liberation, the physical and spiritual, explicit, are considerably older, as part of the Seder, than these two outstanding Babylonian Amoraim. They only made obligatory what had been previously customary. cf. Goldschmidt, *Haggadah* etc., pp. 13ff.

[24] The beginning of the account of liberation according to Rav, based on Joshua XXIV.2, "Your fathers lived of old beyond the Euphrates, Terah, the father of Abraham and of Nahor; and they served other gods."

The Mishna establishes the principle that the "telling" of the story of redemption (מגיד), is to "begin with recalling the shame, derogation, enslavement of Israel's origins, and conclude with praise, redemption."[25] The question is subsequently raised in the Gemara, "What is the specific content of the 'enslavement' with which one is to begin the account of the exodus?"[26] Rav replied, "Our fathers were idolaters. . ." and Samuel, "We were slaves unto Pharaoh. . ."

It is helpful—in order to fathom the full significance of the controversy—to recall the general orientation of these two outstanding leaders of Babylonian Jewry. The primary interest and authority of Rav were in ritual law and those of Mar Samuel in civil law—as reflected in the talmudic principle, "The law is in accordance with the opinion of Rav in ritual matters and of Samuel in civil matters."[27] Mar Samuel, the man of wealth, diversified commercial enterprise, an expert in astronomy, calendation, medicine and other sciences of his day, enunciated the principle, "In civil matters, the law of the land is the law."[28] He is also the author of the oft quoted statement, "The only difference between this world and the days of the messiah is political oppression (in messianic days oppression will cease.)"[29] Rav, in contrast, was renowned for his extraordinary piety, as a liturgist, for his humility and spirituality.

Out of such a total *Gestalt*, the real issue involved in the controversy between Rav and Samuel clearly emerges. Not a picayune preference for this or that biblical passage is at issue; but the far reaching questions of the true nature of slavery and of how it is to be overcome. For Samuel, slavery is physical, social, political—"We were slaves in Egypt. . ." Only after liberation from physical oppression, may man truly reach for perfection in the spiritual sphere, the post-messianic dimension. For Rav, however, the prime subjugator is idolatry; prison is not stone walls, nor iron bars; slavery is spiritual—"Our fathers were idol worshippers. . ." Dominant Jewish tradition includes both. As in most other areas, Judaism stresses the conjunct, "and"—not the disjunct, "either/or."[30]

[25] Mishna Pes. X.4.

[26] Pes. 116a.

[27] Bekhorot 49b.

[28] Gitin 10b and parallels.

[29] Ber. 34b and numerous parallels.

[30] See, my study, *Religious Experience in Judaism*, World Union for Progressive Judaism. London, 1958. Much of what I have written is a variation on this basic theme.

Another central concept stressed in the Haggadah is that God, Himself—not intermediaries, not messengers, not powers, human or celestial—is the author and source of freedom. Only He is Israel's ultimate reliance. This "major-wave" of Jewish historic experience is explicitly stated in the exegesis on the verse, ". . . and the Lord freed us from Egypt. . .",[31] which the haggadist interprets ". . . not through the intermediacy of an angel, nor by means of a Saraph, nor by the hands of a messenger; but God, in His glory and by Himself. . ."[32] This absolute denial of intermediaries in the drama of the exodus is of a piece with the apparently intentional omission of any reference to angels in the authoritative Mishnah of Judah Hanasi, who even refrains from quoting a biblical verse in which an angel is mentioned.[33] The puzzling absence of Moses from the traditional Haggadah—his name appears not once— also seems subtly to emphasize the same theme.[34]

Moses who, according to the rabbinic view, is "superior to angels", whom "angels fear" and from whom "they take instruction",[35] is no

[31] Deut. 26.8.

[32] All mss. and earliest versions of the Haggadah, even those which omit much of the midrash on Deut. XXVI.5ff., include this passage (with minor variations). cf. Yer. Sanhed. II.1 (20a); Yer. Horayot III.2 (47a) and Maimonides, Hil. Yesodei Hatorah II.4-9; Moreh I.43; II.3-7; III.13.

[33] See, the lengthy discussion of this point by David Neumark, *Toldot Haikkarim Beyisrael*, vol. II, pp. 3-12. cf. K. Kohler, *Jewish Theology*. Macmillan, N.Y., 1928, pp. 186ff. and L. Finkelstein, "The Oldest Midrash etc.", *Harvard Theol. Rev.*, vol. 31, 1938, pp. 306-309. Finkelstein's analysis is far fetched. G. F. Moore (*Judaism etc.*, vol. I, p. 411, note 1, and vol. III, notes 142f.) explains the fact that the Mishna makes no mention of angels as, "... the character of the work gives no occasion to do so." He apparently did not consider Neumark's evidence on this question.

[34] Though Neumark (*op. cit.*, pp. 82ff.) is highly speculative and characteristically pilpulistic in his analysis of the rabbinic sources, and in attempting to prove his basic assumption that practically all of Tannaitic Literature is a polemical response to Christianity, he does discern the close relationship between the rabbinic attitude toward angels and the attitude of the Rabbis toward Moses.

[35] For the numerous rabbinic references to this theme, see: L. Ginzberg, *The Legends etc.*, vol. V, p. 160, and often (see index—angels, Moses), and A. J. Heschel, *Torah Min Hashamayim etc.*, The Soncino Press, 1962, pp. 266ff. Note especially the chapter "*Moshe Rabeinu Umal'akhei Hasharet*," pp. 278ff. The literature of the Tannaim is, however, ambivalent about the exaltation of Moses. On the one hand, to protect the uniqueness and perfection of the Torah and of the revelation to Moses (*Einmaligkeit*), the Rabbis must stress the absolute superiority of Mosaic prophecy. It was different in kind from that of all other prophets. On the other hand, the theology of the Rabbis and the challenge of Christianity demanded that Moses remain human, mortal, finite. See, for example, Mekhilta Yishma'el, B'o (Horowitz, p. 3) where Moses is placed on the level of Aaron (Aaron is the equal of Moses). Note the tannaitic parallels and the citations of Neumark, *loc. cit.*

more a necessary, indispensable agent in the unfoldment of the drama of freedom than are the other "created" beings.[36] The plan is His; its fulfillment is to be ascribed to no other. Natural powers, cosmic processes (spheres, intelligences) and especially men—men who have the "capacity to listen," who "hear and respond"[37]—they are the means whereby His actions become manifest. But they are neither the true source, the initiators, nor the real actors. When crucial events are involved, only the ultimate, decisive Cause is of consequence; only He is to be praised and adored. Just as He is the source of creation; the only Creator; all else is creature—"I, the Lord . . . stretched out the heavens by Myself. . . Who was with me?"[38]—so is He the one who gave sanction to the exodus.

Though this categorical rejection of intermediaries was, in all probability, polemically motivated—an early rabbinic response to Gnostic and Christian challenges[39]—it is no less a logical consequence of Judaism's core teaching; an age-old, native doctrine which is only refined, clarified and given precise formulation under external pressure. The insistence on God's direct intervention in the exodus qualitatively changes the essential nature of the event. Israel's liberation is given cosmic status akin to the original creation. The freedom of Israel thus becomes inalienable, permanent, unchanging—a natural right sanctioned by God, which no temporary circumstance or agent can alter. The exodus is not a time-place conditioned event caused by agents who are themselves creature. It is the central historic experience which validates all subsequent development.[40] Freedom is a constant live option—Israel's true beginning and its ongoing destiny.

Numerous other concepts and concerns—almost the total gamut of Rabbinic Judaism—may be discerned in the liturgy of the Seder, if the mind and heart are open and responsive. The core of the Haggadah is

[36] Note the controversy: Were the angels created on the second or fifth day? (Gen Rab. III.5 and parallels noted by Theodor). The point of the passage is that in either case, they were not in existence on the first day. cf. M. Kasher, *Torah Shelemah*, vol. I, p. 42.

[37] Leviticus Rabbah I.1, and parallels cited by Margulies, p. 1.

[38] Isaiah XLIV.24. Gen. Rab. I.3 cites this verse and translates with the ketiv מי אתי—to refute those who would claim that angels assisted God in creation.

[39] See references in note 33.

[40] I. Abravanel (*Zevah Pesah*, Venice, 1545, p. 51a) maintains that the belief in the exodus from Egypt is the one essential principle of Judaism, from which all other *Ikkarim* flow. cf. my study, "Isaac Abravanel on Principles of Faith," *Hebrew Union College Annual*, vol. XXVI, 1955, pp. 481ff.

the product of tannaitic and early amoraic times.[41] The various passages included in the ritual, the symbols and ceremonies, though they often stem from earlier periods, are to be understood not in terms of their origin, as part of their earlier context; but within the frame of the literary forms, the thought patterns, the cultural, political, social milieu of the first few centuries of our era.[42] A biblical verse cited in the liturgy of the synagogue—with or without changes—or quoted in a haggadic or halakhic passage, must be treated as a liturgic or rabbinic text. The precise, literal meaning of the verse in its original stratum, is of relevance only as an aid, to appreciate more fully the subtle nuances of rabbinic exegesis.

Thus, the biblical descriptions of the Passover, or the references in the papyri and ostraca of Elephantine, Jubilees, Ezekielos, Wisdom of Solomon, Philo, Josephus,[43] and even the much belabored Last Supper passages in the Synoptic Gospels and John[44]—they are all only tangential to the understanding of the Haggadah. Similarly, the elaborate attempts to demonstrate that features of the Seder Service and of the festive meal are reminiscent of a typical Roman banquet, or that they may possibly

[41] G. Alon (*Toldot Hayehudim Beeretz Yisrael Bitkufat Hamishnah Wehatalmud*, Israel, 1962, pp. 165ff.) argues persuasively that a number of tannaitic statements usually considered of pre-destruction origin are actually from the post-destruction period. He believes that Rabban Gamliel laid the foundation and was primarily responsible for the version of the Haggadah.

[42] Joseph Heinemann (*Hatefilah Bitkufat Hatannaim etc.*, Jerusalem, 1964) attempts to apply the methods of form-criticism to the liturgy (following A. Spanier). Heinemann's results are only partially successful, not because of the limitations of the method, but due to an often unimaginative and, at times, faulty use of it. In my study, "A Rabbinic Defense of the Election of Israel," *HUCA*, vol. XXXIV, pp. 103-143, I analyze a few tannaitic texts using the form-critical approach.

[43] For references, and analysis of the biblical, hellenistic, New Testament, Elephantine and Qumran sources, see: J. B. Segal, *The Hebrew Passover*, Oxford University Press, London, 1963, pp. 1-77.

[44] J. Jeremias (*The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1955, pp. 177ff.) compiled an exhaustive bibliography (seven crowded pages) of those who take the view that the Last Supper was a passover meal; was not a passover meal (pp. 180ff.); "wholly sceptical and undecided" (p. 183). Some of the "Seder" features "discovered" in the reports of the Last Supper and other New Testament allusions by imaginative scholars are far fetched to the point of embarrassment. D. Daube's conjecture that "...it would be rash..." not to entertain the possibility that "An only kid" goes back to the times of Jesus; or his analysis of the four questions, or of the "fourth cup" etc. etc., are by no means the most extreme examples. (See: D. Daube, *The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism*, London, 1956, pp. 330f., 163ff., etc.)

have been influenced by Symposia Literature, are interesting footnotes.[45] They cast little light on the significance of the Seder for Rabban Gamliel, Akiba, Rabbi Tarphon and Rabbi Eliezer—the scholars who shaped and created the liturgy for the first night of Passover.

Of far greater relevance for the understanding of the Haggadah as a living, developing liturgy is the vast commentary literature. What the Seder actually meant to the Jew of each age; the meanings derived from and put into each word and symbol, are to be found in the thousands of editions of this most commented upon Jewish classic.[46] The Seder Service, when viewed through the almost endless stream of commentaries, reflects the total Jewish saga. This level of meaning, however, takes us beyond the *Peshat*—into the realm of *Remez*.

II

ON METHOD

The hierarchical fourfold method of interpretation (*Pardes*[47]—a mnemonic for *Peshat, Remez, Derush, Sod*) appears first in the literature of the *Zohar* in the thirteenth century.[48] Some earlier and later exegetes discerned only three basic forms, while others, following the midrashic tradition,[49] refer to the seventy or more "faces" of the Torah without attempting to reduce them to general categories.[50]

Implicit in all strata of Rabbinic Literature, however, is the assumption that a scriptural text has numerous levels of exoteric and esoteric meanings.

[45] The similarity of the Seder to the dining customs of the general environment (Roman, Persian) was first systematically discussed by that amazing scholar, M. Friedman (Ish Shalom) in his pioneering commentary on the Haggadah (*Me'ir 'Ayin 'al Seder etc.*, Wien, 1895). The latest effort is the study by E. Stein, "The Influence of Symposia Literature on the Literary Form of the Pesah Haggadah," *The Journal of Jewish Studies*, vol. VIII, Nos. 1 and 2, 1957, pp. 13-43.

[46] See, Abraham Yaari, *Bibliographia shel Haggadot Pesah, etc.*, Jerusalem, 1960; the additions by I. Rivkind, and the addenda listed by T. Wiener and others in *Studies in Bibliography and Booklore*, vol. VII, 1965.

[47] Based on the well known talmudic legend of the four *Tannaim* who entered the *Pardes*. Hag. 14b., Tosephta Hag. II.3.

[48] For the literature on the origin of the "fourfold method" and its relationship to Christian exegesis of the early Middle Ages, see, in addition to the references in the note to the title of this study, G. G. Scholem, *On the Kabbalah and its Symbolism*, London, 1965, pp. 32-86 (the latest version of the essay which first appeared in *Diogenes, loc. cit.*)

[49] Numbers Rabbah XIII.15, on the basis of the numerical value of *Yayin* (Amos VI.6) cf. references in note 1, above.

[50] See, G. Scholem, *op. cit.*

It was axiomatic for the teachers of the Talmud and Midrash that the Torah speaks in hints, allusions, metaphor allegory, in secrets and mysteries.[51] Moreover, their own creativity—whether in the form of biblical exegesis, legends, liturgies, rituals and symbols—frequently contained (or were very early interpreted to contain) the same layer upon layer of depth which the rabbinic sages derived from and put into Scripture.

The rabbinic sources—if approached without narrow rationalist bias and with the proper methodologic tools—reveal, for example, that the blessing before a meal over a loaf of bread[52] was, for the second or third century Jew, a prayer of praise and thanksgiving; a sacrificial offering at the altar (the table was a *mizbeah*);[53] a desanctification of the food to make it fit for human consumption;[54] a messianic hope and a realized eschatology (*me'ein 'olam ha-b'a*)—the experience of the time when God will again, as He did in the Garden of Eden before the sin of Adam, literally "bring bread (fully prepared) from the earth,"[55] and man will be free of the curse, "By the sweat of your brow shall you eat bread."[56]

All of these nuances plainly emerge from the rabbinic passages, without recourse to the corroborating evidence found in hellenistic, New Testament, or later, mystic literature, and without appealing to the universal connotative language of symbolism interpreted in Jungian or Freudian categories—the depth response evoked by the structure inherent

[51] See, W. Bacher, *Die Exegetische Terminologie der Jüdischen Traditionsliteratur*, Leipzig, 1905, vols. I, and II under the terms: *Peshat, Darash, Seter, Sod, Notarikon, Remez*, etc. Note also the fine discussion of I. Heinemann, *Darkhei Ha'agadah*, Jerusalem, 1949, pp. 108-161.

[52] Though based on Psalms CIV.14, the formula for the blessing over bread first appears in Tannaitic Literature. See Mishnah Ber. VI.1 and parallels.

[53] See Avot III.3; Hagigah 27a; Ber. 25a and Men. 97a. The halakhic minutiae concerning the blessing, the cutting and distribution of the bread etc. become a logically integrated whole if the loaf of bread is seen as a sacrificial offering.

[54] Tosephta Ber. IV.1; Yer. Ber. VI.1 (9d, f.); Ber. 35a; Siphra, Kedoshim, on Lev. XIX.24, III.9, Ed. Weiss, p. 90a. cf. S. Lieberman, *Tosephta Kifshuta*, vol. I, p. 18; and H. Albeck, *Mehkarim Bebaraita Wetosephta*, Jerusalem, 1944, p. 95.

[55] The main sources are: Gen. Rab. XV.9; Yer. Ber. VI.1 (10a); Ber. 38a; Siphre Deut. 317, Ed. Finkelstein, p. 360; Shab. 30b; Ket. 111a.

The ultimate stage of *'Olam Ha-ba'* is often represented by the Rabbis in terms of God's "providing food for all flesh"—*noten lehem* (the climax of Psalms CXXXVI), or in the image of the "shepherd" who feeds his flock (Psalms XXIII and Ezekiel XXXIV, f.).

[56] Gen. III.19.

in the symbol.[57] The many strata of meaning are present in the total creativity of the rabbinic period, in the liturgy of the synagogue of the early centuries, in the rabbinic Sabbath and festivals, and are present as well in the liturgy, symbols and rituals of the first night of Passover.

In probing the essential difference between the various levels that the Rabbis derived from or put into a text or symbol, Leopold Zunz suggests that the *Peshat,* "the literal" is past oriented— its primary focus is on the transient "was"; *Derush,* "the free treatment of the verse," is concerned with the present—though placed into the received tradition of the past, the demands of the "now" predominate; *Sod,* "the description of the secrets of the faith and of the supernatural realms," strives to "unravel the mysteries of the future, the eternal."[58]

The variety and subtlety of rabbinic interpretation and creativity do not, however, lend themselves to such facile categorization. *Peshat* is often not the "literal" meaning, nor is it restricted to the past. *Peshat* can and does refer to the present and future, as well as to the past. Similarly, *Derush* and *Sod,* with their gamut of exegetic methods and almost inexhaustible depth, resist precise definition on the basis of formal or temporal elements. Various tannaitic insights derived by way of allegory, for example, may be and often have been classified as *Sod* or *Remez* or *Derush*. Neither the type of exegesis, nor the time to which the lesson refers, not even the content will serve as the basis for a universally tenable, consistent classification. A formal, hierarchical schematization is alien to the thought-pattern of the Rabbis; it is artificial, imposed from without, and does violence to the literature. The only categories faithful to the spirit and intent of rabbinic exegesis and eisegesis are those which flow from the *Gestalt* of the Rabbis and emerge from the Rabbinic Literature itself.

The creativity of the Rabbis naturally divides itself into two major classifications:

[57] See, Erwin R. Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period,* Pantheon, New York, 1952-1964, vol. V, pp. 62ff. and vol. VI, pp. 126ff.

[58] Zunz-Albeck, *Haderashot Beyisrael,* p. 33. Roland deVaux (*Studies in Old Testament Sacrifice,* Cardiff, 1964, pp. 24ff.) suggests that these three levels are actually present in the biblical description of the Passover Sacrifice: "a memorial of the past, an assurance of present salvation, Passover finally expressed the hope of salvation to come." He is obviously interested in demonstrating that the biblical Passover conforms to "St. Thomas Aquinas' definition of a sacrament: a sign which commemorates a past fact, manifests a present effect and announces a future good." Apparently, even with all the available tools of biblical scholarship, *midrash* and *peshat* are still difficult to disentangle.

1. The conceptual, discursive, the denotative—the ethical, historic, religious lessons, regardless of their specific content or the exegetic methods whereby they are derived, which can be communicated from one mind to another verbally, in clear, precise terms. Words, concepts, ideas exhaust their total content. Symbols are understood and explained only as "signs" which point to, recall or suggest concepts, moral lessons, events of the past, future and present—all of them capable of being described and taught in denotative terms. The range of ideas within this category, encompasses the total gamut of rabbinic concern—God, Torah and Israel. The methods whereby the various insights are derived may be a literal reading of a text, or intricate hermeneutics, hints, allusions, metaphor, allegory, abbreviation (*Notarikon*), mnemonics and all the rest. The common denominator is their communicability in precise conceptual terms.

2. The second category may be termed the prayerful, the connotative, the poetic—the experiential. The approach to this aspect of the literature is through the *anima,* our poetic being. Words, ideas, concepts, though inevitable and indispensable, intervene and tend to obscure the depth dimension: they must be transcended through involvement and participation. Myth, symbol—not in diluted, demythologized or rationalized forms, but in stark immediacy, experienced, felt, appropriated—convey the deepest nuances. Words are not descriptive; they are evocative; they express more than they indicate. The complex magnetic field of the image, word or symbol—the non-verbal, the ineffable—suggests and evokes, conjures up and elicits. If understood on the denotative, verbal level, the areas of concern, content and even the modes of exegesis appear to be the same as those in the first category: Man and his destiny, God, Torah—hermeneutics, proof texts and syllogisms. These are, however, only the outer shell. The real content is to be discovered by penetrating into the very heart of the kernel—into a realm where past and future merge in the "now", where dread and love, slavery and freedom are experienced simultaneously, as paradox—deeper and deeper into the hazardous a-verbal, a-temporal, where "the eagle hovers over its nest both touching and not touching, and less than a cubit separates the upper and lower waters."[59]

The Passover Haggadah, the symbols of the Seder, the rabbinic discussions of and comments on the Passover liturgy and ritual, fall under the two classifications outlined above. One aspect of the liturgy is con-

[59] Tosephta Hag. II.6; Gen. Rab. II.4, (Theodor, p. 17); Hag. 15a. cf. Deut. XXII, 11 and commentaries.

ceptual; it communicates precise ideas, lessons; it describes historic, current or future events. The various symbols are explained as signs. The *matzah,* bitter herbs, *haroset,* cups of wine point to a historic promise, concept or event. Beyond this level, however, the Seder is an act of worship—of dedication and adoration. The worshipper himself experiences redemption; he hears the footsteps of the messiah and shares in man's ultimate reconciliation.

I have adopted the fourfold categorization (*Pardes*) only as a literary device, without thereby implying that the four hierarchical levels are a true description of the Haggadah literature. For purposes of clarity, I have, quite arbitrarily, assigned *Peshat* and *Remez,* to the first denotative category, and *Derush* and *Sod* to the second, prayerful, connotative classification.

III

Remez—Hints and Allusions

To an academician of the second century, or to a yeshivah *bahur* of any age, nurtured on midrashic legend, the sudden appearance of a biblical figure would have been a not too unusual event. An encounter with 'Avraham *'avinu,* Moshe *rabeinu* or with 'Eliyahu *ha navi'* was, if not a literal reality, at least an ever present prospect.[60] For the rabbinic Sage, as for the Jew throughout the centuries, the personalities of the Bible were not remote figures of antiquity. They were contemporaries.

The patriarchs, prophets, the heroes and saints of ages past were idealized projections of one's teachers or even intimate friends. The Abraham of the rabbinic imagination was a pious, pharisaic Jew, who faithfully observed the six hundred and thirteen positive and negative commandments,[61] who carefully differentiated between the "minor and important" precepts and deduced the minutiae of ritual practice by using the principles of hermeneutics.[62] Jacob, the *'ish tam yoshev 'ohalim,* the ideal Jewish son beloved by his mother, could have been no other than the sensitive, diligent student, a *ben yeshivah* in the *bet ha-midrash* of Shem and 'Ever.[63] And Isaiah, the peripatetic scholar, heard the call, "Whom

[60] See, for example, Friedmann's Introduction to his edition of Seder Eliyahu, Chapter IV, pp. 27ff. He cites all the passages from the Talmud and Midrash which report the appearance of Elijah (*Giluy Eliyahu*).

[61] Gen. Rab. LIX.2, LXIV.3 and numerous parallels. Cf. L. Ginzberg, *The Legends, etc.*, vol. V, p. 259, note 275.

[62] Gen. Rab. XLIV.4-5. Ed. Theodor, p. 461, Lev. R. XXV.6 and parallels noted by Margulies, p. 579, note 8.

[63] Gen. Rab. LXIII.9, Siphre, Deut. 336, Ed. Finkelstein, p. 386. Cf. E. Mihaly, "A Rabbinic Defense of the Election of Israel," *Heb.Un.Col.Annual,* vol. XXXV, 1964, pp. 105ff.

shall I send?", while walking to and fro in the academy (where else would Isaiah spend his time?),[64] and, like any disciplined Jew, he dared not prophesy until he obtained permission from the Sanhedrin.[65]

The rogues and villains of the Bible too, appeared and reappeared with tragic frequency. Every act of treachery, duplicity, cant betrayed the presence of that crafty, cunning Aramean, Laban—that sly, slippery deceiver who plotted "to destroy my father."[66] Esau and Amalek and Pharaoh were as real and as familiar as the most recent taskmaster and oppressor. Antiochus, Vespasian, Titus, Hadrian and a thousand others were but reincarnations of the archetypal tyrant, the Egyptian Pharaoh.

Typical of the classic liturgy is the absence of specific contemporary reference in the Passover Haggadah. There was no need for it. The Pharaoh or Laban of each decade was all too well known. The allusion was crystal clear. No amount of detailed elaboration would say more than the laconic phrase "We were slaves unto Pharaoh in Egypt." Nor would the most exorbitant description of redemption convey the solace, the sure comfort or arouse the expectant hope of the pithy, terse sentence, "And the Lord our God brought us forth from there with a mighty hand. . ." These two statements absorbed within themselves the total Jewish saga—a three thousand year redemptive history.

The oppression in Egypt and, by implication, the exiles and persecutions throughout the millennia, are summarized in the liturgy of the Haggadah in a few terse comments on three fragments of biblical verses. God's statement to Abraham, "Know that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs and they shall be enslaved and oppressed. . .,"[67] prompts the rabbinic comment, ". . . not one alone (Pharaoh) rose up against us to destroy us, but in every generation they rise up against us to destroy us. . ."[68] The verse, "A wandering Aramean was my father. . .," is interpreted to mean, "An Aramean (Laban) wanted to destroy my father . . . Pharaoh decreed only against the males, but Laban wanted to uproot everything."[69] Finally, the continuation of the confession in Deuteronomy, "The Egyptians dealt harshly with us

[64] Pesikta Kahana, XVI, ed. Buber, p. 125b and Lev. Rab. X.2, p. 197.

[65] Aggadat Bereshit, Ed. Buber, Vilna, 1925, XIV.4, p. 11a, and Yalkut Yesha'iah, paragraph 385.

[66] Deut. XXVI.5 as interpreted by the haggadists, in accordance with the standard exegesis of this verse in tannaitic times. Cf. D. Goldschmidt, *Seder Haggadah,* Tel Aviv, 1947, p. 36.

[67] Gen. XV.13. This statement is understood by the Rabbis to refer to all future subjugations. See Gen. Rab. XLIV.18f. and parallels noted by Theodor.

[68] Goldschmidt, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

[69] Deut. XXVI.5 and Haggadah (ed. Goldschmidt), p. 36.

and oppressed us: they imposed heavy labor upon us", is explained by the haggadist in the light of the more detailed, parallel verses in Exodus.[70] These few references exhaust the story of enslavement, suffering, exile.[71]

Similarly, the account of redemption, though more elaborate—the dominant theme of the Haggadah is freedom, exodus—is fully explored in a few biblical verses made more poignant by an occasional, acute remark of the Rabbi. The vast commentary literature on the Passover Eve Service[72]—the record of interpretations and free improvisation of the generations—does supplement the classic text and recalls the details, the specifics of each age. But the most elaborate and imaginative of the exegetes writes from only a partial, limited perspective. Any one of the commentators, in his attempt to explain, to spell out relevancy, reduces poetry to prose and conveys far less than the stark, classic phrase or image. The slavery and freedom, the tyrant and liberator of the Haggadah are *remazim,* archetypes, paradigms. Were the haggadist more specific—were he to say more—he would say less. The patterns and models allude to all the experiences—the commentaries—of the past, and intimate the gamut of possibilities of the future.

The symbols and rites of the Haggadah, too, even if they are understood on the denotative level, only as signs which point to and recall ideas or experiences of the past and those yet to be realized, are left to speak for themselves—to hint, allude, insinuate and suggest. The liturgist does not explain. The Haggadah does include, toward the very end of the account of liberation, immediately before the recitation of the Hallel Psalms,[73] the Mishnah which interprets three of the symbols. But the passage is cited only to stress the requirement of Rabban Gamliel, "Whoever does not explain the following three things on the Passover has not fulfilled his obligation. They are: *Pesah, Matzah* and *Maror.*"[74] The Mishnah is quoted to emphasize the obligation to explain—not to provide

[70] Deut. XXVI.6 is equated with Ex. I.10,11,13.

[71] These brief allusions to enslavement seem almost incidental—only to set the scene for the drama of redemption. Contrast this deemphasis of persecutions with the recent tendency to transform the Haggadah into an elaborate lament—a martyrology. The Seder is a festive occasion, a joyous celebration of freedom.

[72] See references in note 46 above.

[73] Psalms CXIII and CXIV. Note the controversy of Bet Shammai and Bet Hillel in Mishnah Pes. X.5 and Tos. X.6.

[74] Mishnah Pes. X.5. On the antiquity of this Mishnah, the identity of Rabban Gamliel, the changes in the wording, the precise meaning of "these three things," and the possibility that this formula is intended as a polemic against the Christians, see, Goldschmidt, *Haggadah shel Pesah Wetoldoteiha,* pp. 51f. Cf. G. Allon, *loc. cit.* (note 42, above).

the content or precise formula for the explanation.[75] Furthermore, the interpretations center about the *names* of the symbols which are treated as mnemonics: Pesah is explained as *pasah,* 'He passed over;" *maror* suggests *mereru,* 'they embittered;" and *matzah* hints at a form of *yetziah,* "going forth." They are typical midrashic elaborations of names—not explanations of symbols.[76]

Rabbinic Literature abounds in explanations of every minutia. But the array of interpretations is the resource material, the background for imaginative, free play on the text. They are not included in the fixed liturgy. The talmudic and post-talmudic sources suggest, for example, dozens of reasons for the four cups:[77] The four promises of redemption;[78] the four cups in the dream of Pharaoh's butler;[79] the four kingdoms;[80] the four cups of wrath which God will cause the nations of the world to drink; the four cups of salvation Israel will drink in the days of the Messiah and of Gog and Magog;[81] the four decrees of Pharaoh; the four elements; the four ends of the earth from which God will gather Israel; the four generations of the Egyptian sojourn; the four patriarchs (includes Joseph); the four matriarchs; the four fringes (*tzitzit*); the redeemers;[82] the four merits of the Hebrew slaves in Egypt by which they earned redemption.[83] Abravanel sees the first cup as one of thanksgiving to God for having chosen Israel; the second cup is for the Egyptian

[75] Maimonides (*Hil. Hametz Umatzah* VII.5) perceptively notes after citing this Mishnah which requires the explanation of the three symbols, "...and all these things are called *haggadah.*" This *halakha* is included in the commandment, "You shall tell your son..."

[76] Note that Rabbi Yishmael, unlike R. Yoshaiah, translates *pesah* not as "passover," but "protect," in accordance with Isaiah XXXI.5. He rejects the anthropomorphism of God's "passing over." See, Mekhilta de-Rabbi Yishmael, Tractate Pisha, VII, ed. Lauterbach, vol. I, p. 56f.

[77] The classic source for the explanation of the four cups is Yer. Pes. X.1 (37b) and the parallels in Gen. Rab. LXXXVIII.5 and Exod. Rab. VI.4.

[78] Ex. VI.6f.

[79] Gen. I.11 and 13. Cf. Kasher, *op. cit.*, p. 91, note 32 and pp. 93f.

[80] The four kingdoms usually refer to: Assyria-Babylonia, Media-Persia, Macedonia-Greece, Rome. In the later strata, the fourth kingdom designates Edom-Ishmael (Christianity and Islam). The four diasporas are: Babylon-Chaldea, Media-Persia, Macedonia-Greece, Edom (Rome)-Ishmael (Arabia). On occasion, the literature refers to five, six, seven and even eight kingdoms.

[81] For the proof-texts, see references in note 77, above.

[82] Elijah, Davidic Messiah, the Messiah ben Yoseph and the Kohen Gadol. Cf. Kasher, *Torah Shelemah,* vol. IX, p. 9, note 36.

[83] See, Mekhilta Yishmael, Tractate Pisha, V, p. 34. "They were above suspicion in regard to chastity and tale bearing; they did not change their names and they did not change their language."

redemption; the third cup is for God's providential care in the current exile; and the fourth is for the promised redemption in the future. Elijah Gaon understands the cups to correspond to the four worlds: This world, The days of the Messiah, Resurrection and The world to come (*'Olam Ha-ba'*).[84]

These and numerous other explanations of the cups, red wine, *haroset*, the three *matzot* (even a condiment like salt water, and a delicacy like parsley are variously interpreted and given religious significance) constitute the apperceptive mass which the knowledgeable Jew brings to the text and to the symbols of the Seder. In a few measured phrases, images and symbols, the traditional liturgy recalls all that has been said and evokes considerably more.

Another example of *Remez*, of suggesting a complex syndrome of ideas in a word or phrase, is the midrash on Deut. XXVI.5-9, one of the most ancient sections of the Haggadah.[85] From the biblical phrase "and he (Jacob) became there (in Egypt) a great nation," the exegete deduces that the Israelites were *metzuyanim*, "distinguished"—they retained their identity.[86] The Haggadah does not specify what the distinguishing characteristics were. All that the haggadist adds to the biblical verse is the single word *metzuyanim*.

In parallel tannaitic passages, however, *metzuyanim* is followed by *mitzwot*.[87] The identity of the children of Israel, according to the Rabbis, was the diligent performance of commandments. The Mekhilta, in a passage frequently associated with the comment *metzuyanim*, states that the Hebrew slaves in Egypt earned their redemption by scrupulously observing four commandments: "They were not suspect concerning chastity, slander (they did not inform on one another); they did not change their language and they did not change their names.[88] A later Midrash adds, "They did not change their style of dress."[89]

The one word *metzuyanim*, if understood in the light of the apperception of a second century Jew and in terms of the particulars and specifics added by the commentators of each age, describes and prescribes a total program for Jewish survival. The call to identify, to be *metzuyan bemitzwot* given precise definition by the interpreters of the generations as they addressed the needs and realities of their day—is a comprehensive summary of the Jewish response to his environment from the beginning of our era to modern times.[90]

IV

Derush and *Sod*—Poetry and Mystery

Along with the goal of transmitting and perpetuating religious insights and historic events, the liturgy of the Seder Service has another, perhaps deeper Tendenz—a purpose which, because of the demands of a rational, controlled, halakhic Judaism and because of the threat of heterodox mystery cults, the Rabbis concealed more than they revealed. The inherent tension between traditional religious authority and exorbitant exegesis or direct mystic experience made the Rabbis wary and circumspect. This level of meaning is therefore, especially in its extreme forms, more elusive and is often discovered only by "letting it happen to one."

The response to the "four questions" begins with a clear exposition, "We were slaves unto Pharaoh in Egypt and the Lord our God brought us forth. . ."[91] But in the very next sentence the mood changes from a conceptual reminiscence to a here and now experience: "Had not the Holy One blessed be He redeemed our fathers from Egypt, we, our chil-

[84] For a number of other explanations of the four cups and for the precise references, see: Kasher, *Torah Shelemah*, *loc. cit.* and *Haggadah Shelemah*, pp. 90ff.

[85] In addition to the references in note 23, above, see D. Goldschmidt's analysis of Finkelstein's theses concerning this Midrash, *op. cit.*, pp. 31ff.

[86] Siphre Deut., 301, to Deut. XXVI.5, ed. Finkelstein, p. 319; Seder Haggadah, Schocken, Tel Aviv, 1947, p. 36.

[87] Siphre Deut. 36, on Deut. VI.9, p. 68: "God says to Israel, 'My sons, be identified by *mitzwot*, by observing commandments (*Tephillin* on your foreheads and arms, *mezuzot* on your doorposts and *tzitzit* on your garments)...' Also, Siphre on Deut. XI.17, p. 102, "Even though I shall exile you from the land...be identified by *mitzwot*... This is what Jeremiah said, 'Set up waymarks (*tziyyonim*) for yourself, make yourself guideposts...(XXXI.20);' these are the *mitzwot* whereby the Israelites are identified." Cf. Lev. Rab. XXIV.4, p. 556, the comment on Psalms XX.3, *umitzion yis'adekha*.

[88] Mekhilta Yishmael, *loc. cit.* (note 83, above). Cf. Lev. Rab. XXXII.5; Num. Rab. XX.22; Midrash Psalms CXIV.4.

[89] Midrash Lekah Tov on Ex. VI.6. Cf. Yalkut, Balak, par. 768, on Num. XXIII.9, "There is a people that dwells apart..."

[90] This passage of the Haggadah and its midrashic parallels served as a popular text for the pietistic anti-reformers of the 19th century. Rabbi Ezekiel Panet of Karlsburg, Chief Rabbi of Siebenbürgen (my great-grandfather, 1783-1845), in his commentary *Mar'eh Yehezke'l* on the *Haggadah* (p. 20a) writes: "*Metzuyanim* means that they were recognized by their clothing and by their conduct...and this brought about their redemption...even though they had no other merit. For God acts to magnify his own glory (before the nations)...and when Jews are not recognized as Jews, their suffering is not a profanation of the Name, for it is not recognized who is in exile..."

[91] Deut. VI.21f. The recitation of these verses is required by Mar Samuel and Rav Nahman (Pes. 115a). Cf. Notes 19ff. and text, above.

dren and our children's children would be slaves. . ." Saadya Gaon, following the 'Amora Rava (first half of the fourth century), adds, "*we'otanu hotzi*. . .—He redeemed *us*."[92]

The continuation of the passage, which superficially seems to have no connecticton with the preceding sentence,[93] is a further, though more subtle, elaboration of the same experiential mood. The haggadist urges: "Even if all of us were wise . . . and well versed in the Torah, it would still be our duty to tell of the deliverance. . ."[94] This statement is buttressed by a *ma'aseh*,[95] an actual occurrence of four first and early second century Rabbis who expounded the exodus all night.[96] Now, if the only purpose of the Passover eve service is to teach children or to inform the ignorant, why the emphasis on the obligation of a *ḥaburah shel ḥakhamim*, a group of scholars? They are not in need of instruction. But they are nevertheless obligated, the haggadist insists, perhaps more so than the less informed, to engage in the laws of Passover—to bear witness to the God who delivers and saves, to experience, to be redeemed and, on the deepest level, to share, to participate in, and possibly even help direct a redemptive process, which embraces mankind and *kivyakhol*, God Himself.[97]

[92] Rava's statement (Pes. 116b) is understood by Saadya to apply to the paragraph *'Avadim hayinu* (*Siddur R. Saadya Gaon*, Jerusalem, 1941, p. 137). The other medieval authorities, including Maimonides, add Rava's phrase to the mishnaic passage, "In each generation every man is obliged to see himself as if he, himself, went forth . . ."

[93] Goldschmidt (*op. cit.*, p. 17) remarks: "The passage 'Even if all of us were wise . . . etc.' has no connection with the sentence that precedes it. The style indicates that it was taken from some book of commandments, but its source is not known."

[94] The Tosephta (Pes. X.11) states this is a *halakha*: A man is obligated to engage in the laws of Passover all night, whether he is with his son, *by himself* or *with his disciple*." The Mekhilta (Bo' XVIII, ed. Horovitz, p. 74) is more explicit: "How can you prove that even a company of sages or disciples of the wise are required to sit and engage in the laws of the Passover until midnight? . . ."

[95] *Ma'aseh*, citing the practice of an authoritative teacher as proof for a required procedure, is a frequent occurrence in Tannaitic Literature. The conduct of a sage was Torah.

[96] Cf. Tosephta Pes. X.12.

[97] See the Mekhilta comment (*Bo'*, XIV, p. 51), "Whenever Israel is enslaved, *kivyakhol*, the Shekhinah is enslaved with them . . . and when they return in the future (they are redeemed), *kivyakhol*, the Shekhinah will return with them." Note also the numerous comments in the literature on Isa. LXIII.9, "In all their affliction, He was afflicted . . ." and Psalm XCI.15, ". . . I will be with him in trouble." That God is in exile and that man's highest task is to redeem, make whole, perfect God Himself, are very prominent themes in all strata of Rabbinic Literature. On the expression *kivyakhol*, see Bacher, *Terminologie, etc.*, I, p. 72.

That the Seder is a redemptive experience, is most clearly stated in a Mishnah[98] quoted by the haggadist: "In every generation, each Jew is obligated to see himself as if he went forth from Egypt, as it is said in Scriptures, "And you shall tell your son on that day, 'It is because of what the Lord did for *me* when I went forth from Egypt.' . . ."[99] Maimonides, following earlier versions, adds, ". . . as if he, himself went forth *now* from Egyptian slavery, as it is said, 'And he redeemed us . . .' Concerning this did the Holy One blessed be He, command in the Torah, 'You shall remember that you were a slave,' that is to say, as if you, yourself were a slave and you went forth to freedom and you were redeemed."[100]

The level of immediacy, of witness, of direct experience hovers beneath the surface of the entire Haggadah and of the rabbinic discussions of the liturgy and symbols of Passover eve. The controversy between the schools of Hillel and Shammai whether only Psalm CXIII or also Psalm CXIV should be recited;[101] the difference of opinion between R. Akiba and R. Tarphon concerning the wording of the blessing at the conclusion of *maggid*, of the "telling" of the story of redemption;[102] the different versions of the *ḥatimah*, the eulogy, whether it is *ga'al yisra'el*, in the perfect, or *go'el yisra'el*, indicating the present and future;[103] all reflect different emphases on one or the other aspect of the Seder Service, the didactic or the experiential.

The variant forms in which the "Baraita of the four sons" has been transmitted, may be more clearly understood, if viewed from this per-

[98] Pes. X.5. This passage is missing in a number of mss. of the Mishnah. It is, therefore, surmised that it is a Baraita. M. Kasher, (*op. cit.*, pp. 127ff.) cites all the extant versions.

[99] Ex. XIII.8.

[100] *Hil. Hametz Umatzah* VII.5. Note, too, that Maimonides prefers the version, *lehar'ot et 'atzmo* instead of *lir'ot*.

[101] Mish. Pes. X.6. See especially the parallel Tosephta (X.9) which explains the basis of the controversy. The various views on whether "the redemption from Egypt shall be recalled at night" or not (Mish. Ber. I.5 and parallels), and the controversy between R. Yohanan and R. Yehoshua b. Levi concerning the recitation of the *ge'ulah* blessing immediately prior to the petitionary prayers (*somekh ge'ulah litephillah* or *tephillot be'emtza'*—Ber. 4b), all hinge on the same underlying principle and reflect the differing rabbinic emphases on the experiential or didactic levels of prayer.

[102] Mish. Pes. X.6.

[103] Goldschmidt (*op. cit.*, p. 58), concludes, "The eulogy of the blessing was, without doubt, *go'el yisra'el*, in the present . . ." cf. Heinemann, *Hatephillah* etc., p. 46, note 41. He argues (against Goldschmidt) that *ga'al* is an original, alternative form.

spective. Scholars, both ancient and modern,[104] have been perplexed by the significant differences between the versions of this tannaitic passage in the three primary sources, the Mekhilta de-Rabbi Yishm'a'el, Jerusalem Talmud and the Passover Haggadah. Though a number of imaginative explanations have been suggested, they all involve radical tampering with the text and are far from satisfactory. The problem still awaits solution.

Consider the question and the reply to the "wise son" in the three sources.[105]

Mekhilta	Jer. Talmud	Haggadah
"What does the wise one say?" 'What is the meaning of the testimonies and the statutes and ordinances which the Lord your God has commanded *you*?'[106] you expound (*petah*) for him the laws of passover; 'We must not conclude the Seder with revelry' (*'ein maphtirin 'ahar haspesah 'aphikoman* —moving about from one group to another drinking and feasting)."[107]	"What does the wise son say? 'What is the meaning of testimonies and the statutes and ordinances which the Lord your God has commanded *us*?' You tell him, 'With a mighty hand the Lord redeemed us from Egypt from the house of bondage."[108]	What does the wise one say? 'What is the meaning of the testimonies and the statutes and ordinances which the Lord your God has commanded *you*?' You tell him according to the laws of passover; 'We must not conclude the Seder with revelry (same as Mekhilta)."

[104] See, L. Finkelstein, "Pre-Maccabean Documents in the Passover Haggadah," *Harvard Theological Review*, XXXVI, 1943, pp. 1ff. and Goldschmidt, *op. cit.*, pp. 22ff.

[105] Mekhilta Yishmael, Bo', XVIII (ed. Horovitz), p. 73.

[106] The question is from Deut. VI.20. The Septuagint apparently reads "us." See, however, Goldschmidt, *op. cit.*, p. 29, note 22. The proper reading, in the Mekhilta is "you." This reading is supported by a number of mss. (see, ed. Lauterbach, vol. I, p. 166), by the internal logic of the passage and by the general midrashic idiom. The concern is not with *'ethhem*, but with *'edut etc.*

[107] See, Mish. Pes. X.8 and ed. Albeck, Mo'ed, p. 457, note on mishnah 8. Cf. Pes. 119b and Yer. Pes. X.6 (37d).

[108] Ex. XIII.14.

The major variants are: In the Mekhilta and Haggadah the "question" is a quote from the masoretic text, Deut. VI.20, "commanded *you*," whereas the Jerusalem Talmud reads, "commanded *us*." The Mekhilta and the Haggadah give essentially the same reply, but the Jerusalem Talmud replies by quoting Exodus XIII.14 (a verse which refers to the redemption of the first-born).

Now, it is quite evident that the questioner is identified as the "wise son," in the Mekhilta and Haggadah versions, because of the phrase, "testimonies, statutes and ordinances." He is wise because he wants to know it all—every detail. The answer is, therefore, very much to the point, "Expound for him the laws of the passover (to the very last detail), 'We must not conclude the Seder with a revelrous travelling dessert.'" The quote is the final law concerning the Seder in the Mishnah Pesahim. These two sources say, "He wants to know all the minutiae—teach him all of them—to the last law in the Mishnah. Since he desires to know the detailed laws, the reply must be from the oral law, the Mishnah, where the *halakhot* are defined."

What, however, characterizes the one who asks this question as the "wise son" in the Jerusalem Talmud? It cannot be that he wants to know the "testimonies, statutes and ordinances," for the answer, then, would be irrelevant—a *non sequitur*. He is "wise," we suggest, because he changes "*'etkhem* you" to "*'otanu* us." He includes himself; he participates. The reply, ". . . the Lord redeemed *us*" is now apt and very much in place. "You are required to perform all the rites," the wise son is told, "because you were redeemed."[109]

The same tendencies may be discerned, upon close analysis, in the continuation of the passage in the questions of the three other sons and in the variant replies. The Mekhilta of the school of Yishma'el, in consonance with the dominant mood of the total volume, emphasizes the denotative, the conceptual, the didactic. The wise son seeks knowledge. The Yerushalmi version represents the experiential, the connotative, the element of involvement. The wise son shares; he participates and includes himself. The Passover Haggadah by following the order of the Yerushalmi (wise, wicked, simple and the one who cannot ask) and the wording of the Mekhilta, subtly combines both tendencies. We are thus confronted not by two versions of one original passage which has been corrupted or changed, but by two independent original sources, each with its own Tendenz. The first represents the rational control and the second, the

[109] The fact that the context of the verse cited as the reply (Ex. XIII.14) is the redemption of the first-born may hint at an even deeper nuance.

poetic experiential depth. The Haggadah, typical of mature Jewish genius, fuses the two.[110]

If one is open and receptive to the dimension of immediacy, the range of symbols and rites of the Seder, too, assume a radically different aspect. The red wine, the "blood of the grape,"[111] the dippings in the *haroset*, evoked the "blood of the Passover," the "blood of the sacrifice of Isaac," and the "blood of circumcision"—the covenantal rites continually associated with the Seder in all strata of Rabbinic Literature.[112] The prophet Ezekiel's vivid description—quoted in the Mekhilta and the Haggadah—"And when I passed by you, and saw you wallowing in your blood, I said to you: In your blood live; I said to you: In your blood live,"[113] was more than an abstract literary allusion; it was, a profound "here and now" experience.

The "bread of affliction—*lehem 'oni*," the *matzah* became the food of inner, spiritual liberation, the experience of freedom from *se'or*, the sour stuff.[114] To eat *matzah* was to enter the realm of the "unleavened"—a world free of the *yetzer ha-ra'*, of evil passion, of the demonic and "the shade." As one drank the four cups one witnessed "the destruction of the four kingdoms" and savored the "cups of salvation."[115] Passover eve was transformed into a *leil shermurim*, a miraculous watch night, when all the redemptions of past and future are "now"—*Bo nig'alu uvo 'atidin lehiga'el*.[116]

The later customs of opening the door to welcome the messenger of redemption;[117] the cup of Elijah;[118] the recitation of the biblical verses

[110] The assumption that there were two original versions, each representing a different emphasis with reference to the Seder, solves, we believe, all the problems—the order in which the sons are listed in the Mekhilta and Yerushalmi, the designations *tam* and *tipesh*, the differences in the replies, the emphasis of the Yerushalmi on the word *'avodah* in the wicked son's question—which is translated as "burden," etc.

[111] Gen. XLIX.11; Deut. XXII.14.

[112] For references and literature see, S. Zeitlin, "The First Night of Passover," *J.Q.R.*, Vol. XXXVIII, No. 4 (April, 1948), pp. 434ff; G. Vermes, *Scripture and Tradition in Judaism*, Leiden, 1961, pp. 193ff., "Redemption and Gen. XXII."

[113] Ez. XVI.6; Mekhilta Bo' V, p. 74.

[114] *Se'or*, leaven, is the rabbinic image for the "evil inclination." See Ber. 17a, and often.

[115] See references in note 77, above.

[116] Mekhilta Bo' XIV, p. 52, and often throughout the literature.

[117] On "opening the door," see Kasher, *op. cit.*, p. 180 and reference in note below.

[118] The cup of Elijah is not mentioned until the fifteenth century. Its origin and meaning are problems that still await solution. See, *Haggadah shel Pesah le-Maharal Miprag*, London, 1960; J. L. Aviyada (Zlotnik), *Koso shel 'Eliyahu*, Israel, 1958; H. Rosenthal, *"Koso shel Eliyahu etc."*, *Te'urah*, vol. I, no. 4, pp. 14ff.; D. Noy, *"Eliyahu Ha Navi' etc."*, *Mahanayim*, vol. 43-48, 1960, pp. 110ff., A. Margaliot, *Eliyahu Ha-Navi Besifrut Yisrael*, Jerusalem, 1960.

beginning with, "Pour out thy wrath on the nations that do not know thee;"[119] and the "fifth cup" of Rabbi Tarphon,[120] conjure up an elaborate eschatology, the steps in the drama of the final redemption—the coming of Elijah, the war of Gog and Magog, *'Olam Ha-ba'*. The climax is the recitation of Psalm XXIII and the "great *Hallel*," Psalm CXXXVI, over the fifth cup (according to R. Tarphon).[121] The Rabbis knew that the phrase "for His mercy endures forever" is repeated twenty six times in Psalm CXXXVI.[122] They also were aware that the numerical value of the Tetragrammaton, YHWH, the manifestation of God in His completeness—when "His throne and His Name are perfected"—is also twenty six. By reciting the "Great Hallel" and by drinking the fifth cup one entered the *'Olam Ha-ba'* and experienced the time when God, Himself—perfect, complete—is the shepherd who leads his flock beside still waters. He "gives bread to all flesh" and "His mercy endures forever."[123] The Rabbis intimated all of these nuances of the Passover by opening their sermons on the Exodus with the verses from the Song of Songs, "The voice of my beloved behold he comes, leaping upon the mountains, bounding over the hills . . . Arise my love, my fair one, and come away; for lo, the winter is past . . . the time of singing has come. . . ."[124]

[119] Psalms LXXIX.6. On the variant customs see Kasher, *op. cit.*, pp. 177ff. and references in note 118, above.

[120] Pes. 118a.

[121] *ibid.*

[122] *ibid.*

[123] On the rabbinic view of eschatology, see: J. Klausner, *Hara'ayon Ha-Meshihi Beyisrael*, Jerusalem, 1927, pp. 217ff.; A. Z. Eshkol, *Hatenu'ot Hameshihiot* etc., Jerusalem, 1956; J. Ibn Shemuel, *Midreshei Ge'ulah*, Jerusalem, 1954; P. Volz, *Die Eschatalogie der Jüdischen Gemeinde*, 2nd ed., Tübingen, 1934, pp. 360 and 369ff.

[124] Song of Songs II.8ff; Pesikta Kahana V, pp. 47a, ff.; Pesikta Rabbati XV, pp. 70a ff.