



הרב הראשי עיה"ק אלעד **מרדכי מלכא שליט"א**
נשיא וראש מוסדות "אור המלך"

מחבר ספרי שו"ת דרך המלך, אמרי מרדכי, ודרכי המלך על המועדים ועוד
רשת מעונות, ורשת גנים, ת"ת פרי תואר, ובית יעקב פרי תואר, תיכון בית יעקב החדש, ת"ת מאור ישראל,
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Pesach Haggadah

"Pesach, Matzah, and Marror"

"Rabban Gamliel would say: Anyone who does not say the following three things on Pesach has not fulfilled his obligation, and these are what they are - *pesach*, *matzah*, and *marror*." [When one says "pesach," he should look at the shank bone, but should not pick it up]. The Haggadah explains that the *Korban Pesach* that the Jews ate when the *Beit HaMikdash* stood was to commemorate that Hashem passed over [*pasach*] the houses of our forefathers in Egypt when He smote the Egyptians. After reading this section, the leader of the Seder should hold up the matzah and show it to the Seder participants.] The Haggadah then explains that the matzah is eaten to commemorate the fact that the Jews' bread did not have enough time to rise before Hashem, the King of All Kings, redeemed them. After having said this, the leader of the Seder now moves on to the *marror*, which he lifts in his hand and shows the participants. He then reads the Haggadah's explanation that the *marror*, the bitter herbs, recall the fact that the Egyptians embittered the lives of our forefathers in Egypt, subjugating them and forcing them to perform crushing labor.

Disagreement Between the Rambam and Raavad

The Rambam (*Hilchot Chametz U'Matzah* 8:4) rules accordingly, that anyone who does not mention the aforementioned three things has not fulfilled his requirement. He adds that mentioning these things are what is called "*haggadah*," relating the story of the Exodus from Egypt. Additionally, the Rambam states (ibid. 8:8) that after reciting the blessing of *Hamotzi*, one then recites the blessing of *Al Achilat Matzah*, and then dips the **matzah** into *charoset* and eats. Afterwards, he recites the blessing of *Al Achilat Marror*, dips the *marror* in *charoset*, and eats. The Raavad argues strongly on the Rambam's ruling that one should dip the matzah into *charoset*, writing that "This is foolishness." The commentators explain the Raavad's objection in the following manner: we know that the matzah commemorates the redemption while the *charoset* the oppression, for it appears like tar with which the oppressed Jews served the Egyptians. Why, then, would one dip the matzah into *charoset*? They represent opposite themes! The Ridbaz answers that the matzah commemorates both slavery and redemption. It recalls the predicament of slavery, for then the Jews ate matzot so that they would not starve [matzah digests slowly]. It also represents the period of redemption, when the Jews left Egypt hastily, without enough time for their bread to rise. Therefore, writes the Ridbaz, the matzah is also connected to the Jews' enslavement and fitting to be dipped into the *charoset*. There are those who answer that just like we find in *Korech* that Hillel made the matzah and *marror* into one sandwich, so too, is the matzah dipped into the *charoset*.

Questions:

- 1- We must understand why Rabban Gamliel says that anyone who does not say these three things has not fulfilled his obligation even though he has recited the rest of the *Haggadah*. What is so



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special about saying these specific things? Similarly, we must understand why the Rambam writes that these three things comprise the *Haggadah*. 2) We must furthermore ask why Hillel placed the matzah and *marror* together if they symbolize opposite ideas. 3) If *marror* commemorates slavery and matzah and pesach the redemption, should we not say *marror* first? After all, that is the proper sequence – first slavery and then redemption! 4) Why do we use Romaine lettuce for *marror*? While it is certainly sanctioned in halachah, nevertheless, it is not bitter. Shouldn't we use something bitter for *marror*?

The Chag of Freedom

We will begin by stating that Pesach is referred to as "The Festival of Freedom." The simple-minded view "freedom" as the ability to do whatever one pleases, without having to give thought to anything at all. However, our Sages teach us that freedom means freedom from one's evil inclination, which tries to make him transgress the Will of his Creator and divert him from his purpose in this world. Only then will man be truly free. One of the central methods that the *yetzer hara* uses to enslave man is to cause man to contemplate the difficulties he has in life. This brings him to feelings of hopelessness and terrible depression. All of this is because he lacks faith and trust in Hashem. This stems from the fact that man is near-sighted and sees only half the picture. He therefore complains about his life and this prevents him from being happy. However, on Pesach, the *chag* of faith, we must strengthen ourselves to internalize the message that was gleaned from the Exodus, namely, that everything Hashem does is for the best. When man merits seeing the entire picture, he will thank and praise Hashem for everything that has happened to him in his life.

Everything Hashem Does is for the Best

I believe that even though matzah and the *korban Pesach* symbolize the redemption and *marror* and *charoset* symbolize the crushing slavery, we must know that Hashem does not do "evil" things. Anything that appears to an individual as bad, if he would see the full picture, he would want exactly what befell him. If he would be given the ability to request something, he would request nothing different than his "misfortune." This is a lesson we learn from the *marror*. For while the *marror* recalls are suffering, we must remember that it was the crushing labor which hastened the redemption from Egypt, shortening the initial decree of 400 years into 210. Therefore, in retrospect we understand that there was nothing better for us than the *marror*, and it was specifically the *marror* that caused a speedy redemption. This is as our Sages teach in *Masechet Niddah* (31a). There they expound upon the *pasuk* (*Yeshaya* 12:1), "I thank You Hashem, for You were angry with me, and now Your anger has subsided, and You have comforted me." They draw a parable to two men who were soon to set sail on a business trip. One of them got stuck with a splinter. He missed his boat and began to utter blasphemies. Several days later, he heard that his friend's boat had sunk at sea, and therefore started to praise Hashem for His kindness in saving him. The Sages explain that this is the *pasuk's* intention when it states, "And now Your anger



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has subsided and You have comforted me." The Gemara then quotes Rebbi Elazar as saying that the one for whom a miracle is wrought may not even recognize that a miracle was performed for him.

Recognizing Hashem's Kindness Retroactively

After having said this, we can well understand the words of the *Tanna*, Rabban Gamliel and why he placed *pesach* and matzah, which symbolize redemption, before *marror*, even though it does not correspond to the proper sequence of events. The explanation is as we have stated above, that only at the end, after the redemption, can we understand that *marror* is also an ingredient in the redemption process. However, we cannot understand this at the beginning of the oppression. Now we can also understand why we use Romaine lettuce which is not bitter. This teaches us that, in truth, even the *marror* is truly sweet, and this is how we recall our Exodus from Egypt. This is why Hillel placed them together, to teach us that everything is really for the best, and both the *marror* and *charoset* are ingredients in bringing about the redemption. Now we can also understand why the Rambam rules to dip the matzah into the *charoset*, similar to Hillel's custom, because both hint to the redemption. However, man only grasps this truth subsequent to the redemption.

And I Took You Out From Beneath the Bondage of Egypt

To this we can add an amazing allusion that I heard from the *Rishon LeTzion*, R' Shlomo Amar *shlita*. Hashem said to Moshe (*Shemot* 6:6), "Therefore say to the Jewish People, 'I am Hashem, and I have taken you out from beneath the bondage of Egypt, and I saved you from your slavery.'" It is seemingly odd, why does the *pasuk* need to state from "beneath" the bondage of Egypt, it would seemingly have been enough just to state "from the bondage!" The *pasuk* is teaching us that the secret to shortening the 400 years to 210 lay hidden "beneath" the bondage and slavery. It was the kindness that lay hidden beneath the oppression which caused us to leave Egypt, for the intense bondage was only to hasten the redemption.

Words of Mussar

We have learned that one of the foundations of Pesach is to ingrain in ourselves belief in Divine Providence over each individual and over every detail of man's life, acknowledging that everything Hashem does is for the best. Even that which appears evil is only because we do not see the entire picture. This is as David HaMelech said in Tehillim (19:10), "The judgments of Hashem are truth, righteous together." This means that we recognize the truth and righteousness of the judgments meted out by Hashem only when we see all the different pieces of the puzzle together, in their entirety. Only then can we understand that Hashem is a G-d that is full of mercy and that He takes mercy on us like a father takes mercy upon his son. Therefore we must place the *marror* and matzah together like the



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custom of Hillel, and dip the matzah in *charoet*. For it is all for the sake of understanding that everything which transpires with the Jewish Nation is only for their best.

Chag Kasher Ve'Sameach,
Rav Mordechai Malka