

Pesach Mitzvot: A Pesach Shiur By Rav Soloveitchik, zt"l

- Transcribed and summarized by Nisson Shulman. A shiur by the Rav on the mitzvot of Pesach. Is there a separate kiyum of maror like that of the korban Pesach, or is it dependent on the time of the Korban Pesach. The Rav goes on to explain the nature of the mitzvah of sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim, delineating the difference between zechiras Yetzias Mitzrayim, a daily mitzvah, and Sippur. He then continues with the method of Sippur, mashil bigenus umesayem bishvach. He concludes with an explanation of using mikra bikurim of Humash Devarim to tell the story of Mitzrayim rather than the direct parshiyot of Shemos, feeling and reliving the Geulah.

PESACH MITZVOT: A PESACH SHIUR BY HARAV JOSEPH B. SOLOVEITCHIK ZT'L
(Transcribed and summarized by Rabbi Nisson E. Shulman)

(This is the beginning of a much longer shiur that proceeded after these thoughts to elucidate the structure of the Haggadah of Pesach)

On Erev Pesach we are required to perform three Torah commandments and one rabbinic commandment. The three Torah commands are: bringing the korban Pesach; eating matzah; and sippur yetzias Mitzrayim. While the Holy Temple stood, it is possible that moror was a separate, fourth Torah mitzvah. So says Tosfot. Rambam, however, holds that moror was never a separate mitzvah but was always dependent on the korban Pesach. In his Sefer HaMitzvot, he explains: Do not be concerned that I am not counting moror as a separate mitzvah. It does not exist by itself. The mitzvah is to eat the korban Pesach. But there is a law that Pesach should be eaten al matzos umerorim. Consequently, when there is no korban Pesach there is no mitzvah of moror. Thus, if someone could not bring the korban Pesach, whether he was tame, or bederech rechokah, he was also exempt from moror. Tosfot disagrees, and holds that moror, during the time when the korban Pesach was brought, was a separate mitzvah. At that time, if a person were unable to bring a korban Pesach, he would still be required to eat moror. *Ve zar lo yochal bo - bo ein o chel, aval o chel bematzah umoror*. Thus, an arel who was disqualified from eating the korban Pesach would still have to eat moror as well as matzah. The reason moror today is only a rabbinic commandment is because of a separate halakhah that when the Holy Temple was destroyed, the Torah commandment to eat moror would disappear. Today, the Torah commandments of korban Pesach as well as moror have fallen away. So moror, even according to Tosfot, remains today only a rabbinic commandment. The issue is really the nature of the moror commandment: is it the same kiyum as the korban Pesach, or is there a separate kiyum that is dependent upon the time of the korban Pesach.

Nowadays, since moror according to everyone is only a rabbinic commandment, there remain two Torah mitzvot on the seder night; matzah and sippur yetzias Mitzrayim. For matzah really has two kiyumim; the first, like moror, is dependent upon the korban Pesach, *Al matzos umerorim yochluhu*. The second is a Torah mitzvah by itself, *Baerev tochlu matzot*. This latter mitzvah applies nowadays as well.

Let us examine the nature of the mitzvah of sippur yetzias Mitzrayim. Every day we are required to perform the mitzvah of zechiras yetzias Mitzrayim, to remember the deliverance from Egypt. What does sippur yetzias Mitzrayim add? There are several differences between the two mitzvot.

Zechirah is fulfilled by a mere mention of the exodus. Sippur must be in detail and at length. Zechirah is fulfilled if a person merely mentions yetzias Mitzrayim to himself. Sippur must be to another, as the Torah states, Vehigadeta lebincha. A third difference is that Zechirah requires no additional performance. Sippur requires praise and thanksgiving, shevach vehodaah. That is why we recite Hallel as part of the Seder, Lefichach anachnu hayavim lehodot....

How must the mitzvah of sippur Yetzias Mitzrayim be performed?

The principal is stated in the Gemarah, Matchil bignus umesayem bishevach. We must begin with shame and finish with praise. Shmuel holds the shame is the servitude, Avadim hayinu, and the praise is that God took us out of Egypt. Rav holds the shame is that our forefathers were idolators, Mitchila ovdey avoda zarah hayu avotenu, and the praise is that now we are in God's service, Veachshav kervanu hamakom laavodato.... Apparently Rav held that idolatry is tantamount to spiritual slavery.

Rambam accepted both opinions, holding there was no disagreement between them. One statement compliments the other; we must begin with physical and spiritual shame and finish with praise for freedom as well as service to God.

The phrase, Beginning with shame and finishing with praise is, therefore, a statement of the theme. The details must follow. Vedoresh meArami oved avi ad sof kol haparsha; He expounds the entire portion (Devarim 26:5) from Arami oved avi till the end.

When you look carefully at that portion, it appears to mirror Shmuel's opinion of physical shame and freedom, and altogether overlooks Rav's opinion of spiritual transformation. If we examine the portion more closely, however, we see Rav's opinion reflected in the phrase ubemora gadol - zu giluy shechina, so that the revelation on Mount Sinai is indeed mentioned.

It is remarkable that, when the sages wanted to detail the story of the Exodus, they chose a passage in Devarim which deals with bringing bikkurim, and overlooked the whole story told in the book of Shemot. The citations from Shemot are merely to elucidate the declaration found in Ki Tavo. Why?

Apparently the fundamental theme of the mitzvah is not merely to recount what once took place in the Exodus. The requirement is that we should relive the Exodus in such a way that in each generation every Jew should feel that he himself was taken out of Egypt; Bechal dor vadar hayav adam liros es atzmo keilu hu yatza miMitzrayim.

If we were to attempt to fulfill our obligation of sippur yetzias Mitzrayim by citing only the passages from the book of Shemot, we would actually be telling what happened to our forefathers many generations ago. The sages therefore selected the portion from Ki Tavo which is a declaration made by a Jew who was living at peace in the Land of Israel, bringing bikkurim, many generations after the exodus. This Jew is dwelling under his own fig and date tree, declaring his thanks for the land You gave me. This Jew was never in Egypt, and yet he is required to feel as if he himself was redeemed from that land. He himself must feel the Geulah. That is precisely the feeling that we ourselves must experience. That is why the Hagaddah is not

satisfied with the bikkurim portion alone, but illustrates each phrase with the events from the book of Shemot, transporting the Jew back in time as if he actually relived those events.

Furthermore, our sages wanted us to tell the story of the Exodus, not only with the written Torah, but also with the Torah shebeal pe. The citations in the Hagaddah are therefore quotations from the Sifri, expounding the written account together with the oral tradition.

[Submitted by Nisson Shulman]