



Compliments of the Institute of Jewish Studies (founded by [Yankel Rosenbaum](#) HY"D) First Published Adar 5761 Vol 24.28
 Printing in part sponsored by **NLZ Imports, D&A Werdiger, Weis Printing** – email: zichron-yaakov@hotmail.com
 (In memory of Moshe Yehuda ben Avrohom Yaakov, Mala Mindel bas Meir, Moshe Tzvi ben Yitzchok Aharon, Gittel bas Sinai,
 Nechemia ben Menachem Mendel, Yaakov ben Menachem Mendel)

Pesach-Tzav 5785

CLEAN-UP WORK

RABBI YISSOCHER FRAND (Aish.com)

Every morning, the Kohein comes into the Beis Hamikdash, puts on the splendid priestly garb and prepares for a day of sacred service. What is the first task he is assigned? The removal of the ashes accumulated on the top of the Altar from all the sacrifices consumed by the fires on the Altar throughout the long night.

The Chovos Halevavos explains that this is deliberate. The Torah did not want the Kohein's high station to go to his head. Walking into the Beis Hamikdash as a member of the select priestly caste, the Kohein could easily turn to arrogance. He could begin to think that he is somehow better than other people are. Therefore, the first duty he is assigned humbles him. Don't think you're so great and so haughty. Take out the ashes!

Just as the Torah is concerned that the Kohein's ego should not become too inflated, it is also concerned that the poor man's ego should not become too deflated. The Talmud tells us (Bava Kama 92a) that when the people brought the bikurim, the first fruits, to the Beis Hamikdash, the rich would bring them in baskets of gold and silver, while the poor would bring them in baskets of woven reeds. When the rich stepped forward, the Kohein would take the fruits from their baskets and return the baskets to them. When the poor stepped forward, the Kohein would take the fruits along with the baskets. "The poor get poorer," the Talmud observes ruefully.

Granted that circumstances somehow construe that the poor get poorer, but why indeed did the Kohein differentiate between the rich and the poor donors?

Rav Aharon Bakst explains that it was done for the protection of the poor. The rich had fine orchards that produced bounteous fruits, and their bikurim offerings were lavish. When the Kohein took their succulent and luscious fruits, their skins bursting with juice, out of the baskets and laid them in front of him, they were a sight to behold. But the poor had perhaps a few scraggly trees that produced, just barely, a few meager fruits. Had the Kohein taken the poor man's fruits out of the basket, he would have caused him embarrassment. Therefore, he kept the basket along with the fruits, and the poor man retained his dignity.

Some time ago, there was a hachnasas kallah campaign in Baltimore. A well-known and respected family was marrying off a child, and they had no money to cover their expenses. A committee was formed to raise the money.

A question arose. Should the identity of the family be revealed to potential donors? This would probably generate much more money, since the people in the community really liked and respected this family. On the other hand, should their identity perhaps be kept secret to avoid embarrassment?

The question reached my Rosh Yeshivah, Rav Ruderman, and he immediately said, "The identity of the family should not be revealed. A family's honor is worth a great deal."

ON RABBIS AND JEWS

RABBI YOSSY GOLDMAN (Chabad.org)

Without going into the whole question of sacrifices, one difficult phrase that appears in this week's reading, and throughout the early chapters of Vayikra, is reiach nichoach la-Hashem—"a satisfying aroma to G-d." Why the repeated emphasis on satisfying G-d?

Some have suggested that with all the pageantry associated with the Temple rites and rituals, people might come to place undue importance on the kohanim and their ceremonials. The ritual directors might become so prominent in people's eyes that they would forget about the Almighty. It was therefore necessary to remind worshippers to Whom they ought to be directing their offerings, thoughts and prayers.

As a rabbi, I am often asked to pray for people. This one is in need of a blessing for improved health, the other wants to earn a better living, and so it goes. Of course, there are set times for such prayers in the synagogue service, and I am happy to oblige. But I also suggest to people that they themselves should be in shul for the prayer too. Furthermore, there is no more sincere prayer than that of the person in need. Surely their sincerity will be unmatched, even by the most pious of rabbis.

The story is told of a saintly rabbi of yesteryear who was approached by a woman in need of a blessing for her child. The rabbi demanded a large amount for charity in return for his prayer. The woman was apologetic, and said she didn't have that amount of money. Could the rabbi reduce the price? But he was adamant. After all her haggling got her nowhere, the woman stormed out in a huff. "I don't need you to talk to the Almighty for me," she said angrily. "I'll pray for myself."

"Aha," said the rabbi. "That is exactly what I was hoping to hear. Your prayer will, in fact, be better and more effective than anyone else's on your behalf." The saintly man understood that this woman was placing too much credence in him, and forgetting about G-d.

There used to be an unhealthy—and, thankfully, now largely discredited—attitude among many that one could hire a rabbi to perform all religious duties on his or her behalf. Let the rabbi keep kosher, and let him observe Shabbat and the festivals. Let him study the Torah, to keep it alive (barely) to pass on to the next generation . . . of rabbis! Meanwhile, I will live the easy life, and pay for the services of a rabbinical professional when I need them. Until then, don't bother me, I'm busy.

I once encouraged someone to try putting on tefillin in the mornings. His response: "Rabbi, you do it for me." I asked him if I could also eat for him and sleep for him.

Rabbis are not meant to be intermediaries between Jews and G-d. Every Jew has a personal and direct relationship with G-d. There are not 612 commandments for ordinary Jews and 614 for rabbis. We all have the same 613 obligations, no more, no less. Rabbis are only teachers, to advise and to guide. The rabbi will be happy to help and do whatever he can; but remember that, ultimately, we have to help ourselves, and each of us can turn to the single most important address in the universe—and that is G-d. Rabbis may be very reliable, but don't rely on the rabbis. Kohanim, Levites, rabbis and teachers all have their important roles to play. But never confuse the messenger with the One who sent him. Long ago, our sages taught (and it has even become a popular Israeli bumper sticker): "We have no one to turn to but our Father in Heaven."

REASON TO GIVE THANKS

RABBI YAAKOV ASHER SINCLAIR (Ohr.edu)

"If he shall offer it as a thanks-giving offering..." (7:12)

If I live to be one hundred and twenty, I don't think I will ever feel the same feeling of freedom and deliverance as thirty-three years ago on Shushan Purim, when I went into our 'sealed room' and pulled the plastic from the window. From my birthday on August 2, 1990, until the 17th of January in 1991, Iraq fired forty surface-to-surface weapons into Israel, each one of which was feared to be carrying chemical weapons, and Israel was the first

country since the Second World War to issue gas masks to the entire population. In addition, we were all told to seal all our windows and ‘triss’ boxes with plastic sheeting and have a rag soaked in bleach ready to place against the bottom of the door or our ‘sealed room’ to stop chemicals from seeping under the door.

On that Shushan Purim, the day of “reversal,” we went from life-threatening danger to great joy. I felt Hashem’s miraculous deliverance on that day-of-days of deliverance more strongly than on any other day so far in my life.

Another miracle happened recently in Jerusalem, just before Purim.

Six years ago, Rabbi Tzvi Kushlevsky, rosh yeshiva of Yeshivat Kinyan Chochma and Yeshivat Heichal Hatorah in Jerusalem, became a widower at the age of 82. He was childless. He remarried and his second wife was then around 50 years old.

On the morning of the 10th of March, Rabbi Kushelevsky, at the age of 88, celebrated the birth of his first child, a boy.

In Parshat Mishpatim, when dealing with the payment of medical damages, the Torah repeats the phrase, “v’rapoh, yerapeh,” - “And he will certainly heal...” (Exodus 21:19). This repetition teaches us that doctors are allowed to heal people. Why would I think in the first place that they could not? Because the Torah also says, “I, the L-rd, am your Healer.” Maybe only Hashem can heal us and no mortal has the right to interfere? Thus, the Torah has to tell us, “he will surely heal.” The lesson here seems needlessly convoluted. Why does the Torah set up a presumption that only Hashem can heal, “I, the L-rd, am your Healer;” and then counter this presumption with another verse, “he will surely heal”? The answer is that another lesson is being taught here as well. Doctors have permission only to heal, but they have no permission to despair. The word “incurable” has no place in the doctor’s lexicon. A doctor may say, “We have no cure for this at the present time,” or “This case is beyond my expertise,” but the word “incurable” should never escape a doctor’s mouth. For “I, the L-rd, am your Healer.”

And so it was with Rabbi Kushlevsky. He was told that his case was “incurable.” He was told he could never have children but he never gave up hope.

What a powerful lesson this is for us! We are bogged down in a war that, so far, has had no significant results except that the State of Israel has been declared a pariah state by much of the world, and Jews are scared to walk the streets of Europe and America.

But we will not give hope. Ever.

And maybe Hashem sent us a little Purim present this year. A Divine wink to tell us that nothing is incurable. Hashem is our Healer, Hashem is our salvation. Hashem will not let us down. He will bring salvation to his holy People and will wipe the tear from every eye.

BLOODSPORT

RABBI MORDECHAI KAMENETZKY (Torah.org)

Blood. At worst, it invokes ghastly images of death and war. At best, it represents life-saving transfusions. On any scale it is not appetizing. It is for that reason that it is difficult to comprehend the repeated warnings and admonitions that the Torah makes concerning the consumption of blood. Beginning this week, there are three warnings in the Torah concerning the prohibition of consuming blood. There is a specific verse that tells parents to admonish their children and discourage any thought they may have of eating or drinking blood.

Vayikra 22:26-27: You shall not consume blood... from fowl or animal. Any soul that consumes blood will be cut off from his people.

Vayikra 17:10-12: Any man of the House of Israel and of the proselyte who dwells among them, consume any blood — I shall concentrate My attention upon the soul consuming blood, and I will cut it off from its people.

Devarim: 12:23: Only be strong as not to eat blood...

Rashi quotes the words of Rav Shimon Ben Azai: “if blood, which is so repulsive, needs such dire warnings surely one must take great precaution not to succumb to sins that are appealing.” Rabbi Yehudah explains the repetitive admonitions in the context of history. During that era, many nations would actually indulge in blood-drinking ceremonies. Thus the Torah exhorts the Jewish nation on that matter. In any case, it is quite apparent that both Rabbi Shimon and Rabbi Yehudah were bothered by repeated warnings, which should be unnecessary. It is difficult to comprehend why the Torah spends more energy warning, admonishing, and exhorting the Jews against blood-consumption than against most other prohibitions that are much more alluring.

Also, why is this one of only two prohibitions that our sages interpreted an extra verse, as “a warning for parents to admonish their children.” Why does this prohibition surpass the norm of parental supervision that is required by any other Mitzvah?

An old Jewish story has a devoutly religious woman running into a Chasidic

Rebbe as she was crying uncontrollably.

“Rebbe,” she cried, “it’s my son. He went absolutely meshuga. He started acting totally insane. Even you won’t be able to help him. He needs a psychiatrist!”

“What’s the matter?” Asked the Rebbe.

“The matter?” She cried. “He’s crazy! He’s acting like a gentile! He dances with gentile women and began dining on pig!”

The Rebbe looked to the poor woman as he tried to put her problems in perspective.

“If he would dance with pigs and dine on women, I would say that he is crazy. But the way you describe him he is not crazy at all. I’d just say that he is becoming a very lascivious young man. And I can deal with that.”

On a homiletic note, perhaps, we can explain the Torah’s passionate admonitions about blood. The Torah understood the test of time. Acts that are considered vile and obscene by today’s standard may be accepted as the norm tomorrow. Societies change and attitudes change with them. The ten greatest problems of the 1950’s public school class may be considered decent, if not meritorious, behavior today. The Torah understood that society changes. Therefore it admonishes us on the lowest form of behavior with the same intensity as if it would be the normal custom. And it tells us to pass these specific admonitions to our children. We can not dismiss the warnings by thinking, “drinking blood is bizarre behavior. Why should my children need to worry about it?” The Torah says, even if something may be base and bizarre to our generation, if it’s Torah it must be told to our children. It is impossible to know what the next generation will consider repulsive and what it may consider fashionable. Today’s revulsion may be tomorrow’s bloodsport. Times change and people change, but Torah remains eternal.

Pesach

WHO COMPOSED THE ‘KADESH URCHATZ’ RHYME?

RABBI YEHUDA SHURPIN (Chabad.org)

The ritual meal on Passover night is commonly referred to as the “Seder,” which means “order.” Indeed, not only is every detail of the Seder dripping with meaning and profound lessons, but the specific order in which it is done is significant.

Thus, many great rabbis formulated simanim (mnemonics or “signposts”) to help people remember the 15 steps of the Seder.

The classic and most widely used version (found in Ashkenazic, Sephardic and even some Yemenite Haggadot¹) goes like this:

- 1) Kadesh (Sanctify) 2) Urchatz (Wash)
- 3) Karpas (Appetizer) 4) Yachatz (Halve)
- 5) Maggid (Tell) 6) Rachtzah (Wash)
- 7) Motzi (Hamotzi) 8) Matzah (Blessing and Eating Matzah)
- 9) Maror (Bitter Herb) 10) Korech (Wrap)
- 11) Shulchan Orech (Set Table)
- 12) Tzafun (Hidden Afikoman) 13) Beirach (Bless)
- 14) Hallel (Praise) 15) Nirtzah (Desired)

This classic version, which rhymes nicely, is attributed to Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki, known as Rashi (1040–1105 CE), by his student Rabbi Simcha of Vitri.² (Some attribute this version to Rabbi Shmuel Falaise (12th-13th century), one of the authors of the Tosafot.³)

One reason why this version became more popular than others is that the Kabbalists, including Rabbi Yitzchak Luria (Arizal), saw deep, esoteric meanings and lessons embedded in its seemingly simple words.⁴

Many, including Chabad, have the custom of reciting these simanim right before starting the Seder, and before each step we proclaim its name, signifying that the step is full of meaning.

FIFTEEN STEPS OF DIVINE SERVICE

The following is just one homiletic explanation, given by Rabbi Moshe Alshich (1508–1593) and cited by many (including the Rebbe in his Haggadah), of how these simanim represent one’s divine service:⁵

First comes Kadesh, which means “sanctification” or “separation.” If you have sinned and feel impure but wish to come close to G-d, you should begin by sanctifying yourself and separating (Kadesh) even from the pleasures permitted to you.

Only afterward should you cleanse yourself (Urchatz) of all your faults by going through the process of teshuvah.

After doing teshuvah, you should acquire good character traits and not chase after luxuries. Rather, you should be satisfied with a simple meal of vegetables (Karpas).

If you cannot afford to give money to the poor, you should fulfill the verse “Surely, you should break your bread for the hungry,”⁶ which hints that you should divide (Yachatz) your food to give to those who are hungry.

At this point, you should teach (Maggid) others to purify themselves

(Rachtzah) and come closer to G-d. In this way, you are worthy, and you bring merit to others.

This will bring you to Motzi Matzah. The good inclination (yetzer tov) is compared to humble, flat matzah, and the evil inclination (yetzer hara) is compared to chametz. Our good inclination is often hidden or blocked by our evil inclination. By returning to G-d and giving charity, one “brings out” (Motzi) and reveals the yetzer tov (Matazah).

At this point, the evil inclination, which is compared to the bitter Maror, sinks into the “cement” (charoset) and is neutralized. Afterward, we can elevate even the negativity within ourselves and thus eat the matzah and maror together (Korech).

Now, we can have a “set table” (Shulchan Orech) of plenty in this world and in the world to come, where we will enjoy the spiritual delights that have been hidden (Tzafun) by G-d for the pleasure of the righteous.

In this state, we are blessed by G-d (Beirach), and then we will praise (Hallel) G-d, celebrating our freedom from Gehinnom.

At this point, it becomes clear that our divine service is desirable (Nirtzah) to G-d.

Inspiring Others

According to Rabbi Moshe Greenwald (Arugat Habosem) in his Hallel Nirtzah Haggadah, these 15 steps also serve as a lesson plan for the leader of the Seder, who wishes to inspire others with words of Torah:

Before you can inspire others, you must sanctify yourself (Kadesh) and cleanse yourself (Urchatz) of sin.

In addition, you must break (Yachatz) your desires for pleasures (represented by the Karpas vegetable).

Only then can you tell others (Maggid) to cleanse themselves (Rachtzah).

When doing so, however, you must be careful to remove (Motzi) any strife (Matazah can also mean “strife”).

If you need to rebuke (Maror), sandwich (Korech) it within praise.

The teaching should then be as clear and straightforward as a “set table” (Shulchan Orech).

As an aspiring Torah teacher, accentuate the positive. Their inner (Tzafun) heart should be blessed (Beirach) by you, as you point out how they are truly good and holy.

If you rebuke in this manner, you will be praised (Hallel), and your actions will be pleasing (Nirtzah) before G-d.

FIFTEEN WORDS

Some say that there are not necessarily 15 actions to take, but that each word of the rhyme is another step. Now, if you count them, you will find that there are 16! The Rebbe explains⁷ that the final word, Nirtzah, isn't a step in our divine service. Instead, it is a promise from G-d that He will accept our divine service, and ultimately we will merit the final Redemption.

1. See Haggadah Shleimah, preface ch. 16.
2. See Machzor Vitri, 65.
3. See Ohr Zerua 256. See also the Lubavitcher Rebbe in his Haggadah im Likutei Taamim Uminhagim, Simanei Seder.
4. See Haggadah im Likutei Taamim Uminhagim, Simanei Seder.
5. Alshich, Torat Moshe, Shemot 13:11-15.
6. Isaiah 58:7.
7. Haggadah im Likutei Taamim Uminhagim, Pirushim ubiurim, p. 80.

MEANINGFUL QUESTIONS FOR YOUR SEDER

DEBBIE GUTFREUND (Aish.com)

This year we are still praying for the return and safety of the remaining hostages and many Seders will again include an empty chair and a prayer for a hostage who is still waiting to come home.

Asking yourself and your family meaningful questions at the Seder table can help transform Passover into an opportunity to reflect, grow and bring some inspiring light into the darkness. Here are some meaningful questions for your Seder this year.

1. What hard challenge have you overcome this past year?

Passover is a time to reflect upon the times when you have felt stuck in a narrow place and somehow found a way to make it through. What helped you see hope and possibility? What did you learn from that experience? What do you think keeps you stuck in life and what do you think helps you to overcome narrow perspectives and limitations?

You begin the Seder with kiddush, which is a time to sanctify the holiday and its precious opportunity to help you through your own challenges and narrow spaces. Take a moment to express and feel gratitude to G-d for the times He helped you find a way through.

2. What is the story of your own family's journey?

At the Seder table, the Hagaddah guides you through the story of the

Jewish people from the very beginning. It describes the pain and challenge of our suffering in Egypt but also the faith and miracle of our redemption.

Where did your family's story begin and what were the moments of redemption that led to the miracle of everyone sitting around your table today? When you say the blessing of Shechayanu, think of all the big and tiny moments and experiences that have brought you and your family to this moment.

3. Has October 7th and the rise of antisemitism changed your Jewish identity? How?

There are many pivotal events and moments in the Haggadah that change not only the course of Jewish history, but also the way the Jewish people saw themselves and their role in this world. Do you see your purpose in this world differently? Do you think October 7th has changed your role or responsibility as a Jew? How do you think it will change our history and our story as a nation?

When you say “In every generation they rise up to destroy us. But the Holy One, Blessed be He, delivers us from their hands” think about the miracle of Jewish survival throughout Jewish history. Reflect upon the miraculous survival of the hostages that have returned home and upon the courage and tenacity shown by Jews across the world in these turbulent times.

4. What are you most grateful for at this moment?

At the end of the Hagaddah, you recite the Hallel prayer which expresses your gratitude to G-d for everything in your life. Reflect upon what you are most grateful for at this moment as you sit around the Seder table with your family.

When the hostages returned home, they expressed gratitude for the smallest gestures and moments that we so often take for granted. They were grateful to be able to hold their spouse's hand. To hear their children's laughter. To hug their grandparents and siblings. To see the sky. To pet their dog. But more than anything, they were grateful to finally, simply be free.

Ultimately, Passover is about celebrating this freedom that allows you to continue living as a Jew and gathering your children around your Seder table, the same way your great grandparents gathered their children around their Seder tables. The freedom to tell your family's story. The freedom to seek out the truth even as others try to hide it. The freedom to say thank You to the One who has brought us all to our Seder tables once again this year.

May all of the remaining hostages come home soon and take their places around their own family tables. And may the Jewish nation be redeemed from its suffering today.

TELLING STORIES

RABBI YANKI TAUBER (Chabad.org)

Haggadah means "the telling" and that's what we do at the seder table—we tell a story. The oldest, most popular kind of story there is — the Happy Ending kind. That's how the Talmud instructs us to conduct the seder: "Begin with the bad stuff, and end with the good."

As is usual in the Talmud, the Sages, while agreeing in principle, debate the details. Shmuel says that the bad beginning is, "We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt", and the good ending is, "G-d took us out from there with a mighty hand and outstretched arm." Rav says our story includes the larger picture, starting with how "In the beginning, our ancestors worshipped idols" and culminating in our election as G-d's chosen people at Mount Sinai.

(So which story do we tell at the seder? Both of them, of course, which is one of the reasons why it takes so long to get to the chicken soup.)

ALL LIVING CREATURES communicate with each other in some way. But only humans tell stories.

Only men and women contemplate a chaos of facts, events and experiences spanning days, years, even centuries, isolate a number of them in their minds, draw lines of causality and significance between them, and thus create a story—a piece of life that means something and leads somewhere. This is why, explain the Chassidic masters, the Talmud considers the "toil of speech" a most basic component of man's special role as a "partner with G-d in creation." G-d created an awesome, intricate, yet in many ways a still-undefined world; our storytelling completes the work of Creation, imparting to it coherence and significance.

Once upon a time, many years ago when we were little, we knew the importance of the story. We appreciated how central the act of storytelling is to who and what we are, to our job to make sense of our world and take it somewhere. Then we got old, and tired, and lazy, saying to ourselves: "What is, is. It means nothing; let it be."

Which is why we need lots and lots of kids at the seder.

THE SYMBOLISM OF FIVE IN THE HAGGADAH

RABBI YEHOANASAN GEFEN (Aish.com)

A well-known feature of the Haggadah is the prominence of the number

four: the four questions, the four sons, the four languages of redemption, the four cups of wine. Fascinatingly, on deeper analysis, these sets of four all have hints of actually having a fifth member!

The most glaring example is the requirement to drink four cups of wine. In the early versions of the Talmud that discusses this, there is a very surprising comment: “Rebbe Tarfon says: We recite Hallel HaGadol over the fifth cup of wine at the Pesach seder.”¹ This statement is very hard to understand, given that we all know that the obligation is only to drink four cups of wine. Seemingly, because of this difficulty, Rashi and the Rashbam revise the words to state: “We complete the Hallel on the fourth [cup] and say Hallel HaGadol.” According to this version, the problem falls away as Rebbe Tarfon never discussed a fifth cup.

However, other Early Commentaries disagree with this approach and understand that Rebbe Tarfon did intend to include a fifth cup. The Ramam writes: “And one should pour a fifth cup of wine and recite Hallel HaGadol.”²

What then is the difference between the four cups and the fifth? The Rambam explains that the four cups are an obligation, but the fifth is optional. Because of that, although there is an obligation to ensure that poor people can have four cups of wine, there is no need to provide for the fifth. The Ra’avad goes even further than the Rambam and holds that the fifth cup is not merely optional, rather there is a mitzvah to drink it, although it is not an obligation.

Thus, there are three opinions regarding the fifth cup. Rashi and Rashbam rule that it is actually forbidden to drink the fifth cup as it is adding to the mitzvah: the Rambam holds it is permitted to drink it, and the Ra’avad maintains that it is a non-obligatory mitzvah to drink it. The final halacha is to respect all the opinions – we don’t drink the cup in deference to Rashi and the Rashbam but we do pour it out of respect for the Rambam and Ra’avad.

As is well-known, this cup is called the Kos shel Eliyahu – the Cup of the Prophet Eliyahu. The technical reason for this is because when the Talmud has no definitive conclusion to a question, it often says, ‘Teiku’ which is an acronym for “The Tishbi [Eliyahu] will resolve all questions and disputes.” Thus, in the case of the dispute about the fifth cup, it will be resolved by Eliyahu.

It is still unclear what the nature of this enigmatic fifth cup is, and the question arises as to where are other allusions to fives in the Hagaddah that may help understand the fifth cup? As we know, the four cups of wine correspond to the four languages of redemption. Yet, in truth, there is in fact a fifth lashon as well. The four are, “I will take out, I will save, I will redeem, and I will take [to Me for a people].”³ In the very next verse, the Torah continues, “And I will bring you to the Land...”⁴ This refers to G-d bringing the Jewish people into Eretz Yisrael which is the final stage of redemption. It seems that this fifth lashon corresponds to the mysterious fifth cup, but this just makes the problem more difficult – if there is a fifth language then why isn’t it explicitly mentioned as such, and why is the corresponding fifth cup not an obligation like the others?

There is yet another allusion to a five with regard to the questions of Mah Nishtanah. In the version we say in the Hagaddah there are four questions, but in the Mishna in Pesachim there is a fifth question – “On all other nights we eat either roasted, stewed or cooked meat, but on this night all the meat is roasted.” This question was included in the Mah Nishtana’ in the early manuscripts of the Hagaddah that were found in the Cairo genizah. It was asked when the Temple was still standing and they ate from the roasted Pascal Lamb at the Seder. After the Churban, this question was removed and replaced by the question about leaning.

We have now seen three sets of five but the fifth of each one is absent from the Hagaddah. The common denominator between them is that they all represent the final level of redemption that we have not yet reached. Rabbi Daniel Glatstein points out that we are not yet at the point where can drink the fifth cup, the cup of complete redemption. We cannot articulate the fifth expression of redemption about bringing us to the Land because we are still in Exile⁵. There is a missing fifth question about the Pascal Lamb. We hope that we will merit to be able to bring the Pascal Lamb and ask his question soon.”⁶

This explains the enigmatic nature of all the fives – we cannot drink the fifth cup because we have not fully reached the final redemption, we cannot say the fifth term of redemption because we have not yet attained the full redemption in the Land; and we cannot ask the question about the Pascal Lamb until we merit to eat it. This also provides a deeper reason as to why the fifth cup is called the Cup of Eliyahu. It alludes to the fact that when Eliyahu will come and resolve our doubts, that will be when he is bringing the tidings of the final redemption.

The commentaries add another possible ‘fifth’ in the Haggadah. They suggest that in addition to the ‘Four Sons’ there is a fifth son – he is the one

who is not present at the Seder due to his disconnection to Torah. However, this negative interpretation does not seem to fit with the other positive fifths that allude to the final Redemption. Accordingly, perhaps it is possible to suggest that the fifth son is indeed the one who at present is not interested in even coming to the Seder, but as we approach the final redemption he will come back along with all the other lost Jewish souls. In this way, the fifth son is also a harbinger of the final redemption when we will all find Torah.⁷

This is not a mere pipe dream – especially since the events of the past years with the war in Gaza and the rampant anti-Semitism, many distant Jews have been awakened to the fact that there is something different about the Jews and that the world does not accept us if we just try to be like them. Thus, these difficult times are also full of potential to hasten the return of the Jews to G-d.

May we merit on this Pesach to drink the fifth cup of wine and reach the final redemption.

1. Many of the ideas in this article are taken from “Magid HaRakiah” written by Rabbi Daniel Glatstein, pp.169-174.
2. Pesachim, 118a.
3. Rambam, Hilchot Chametz U’Matzo, 8:1.
4. Shemot, 6:6-7.
5. Ibid, 6:8.
6. Even though there is a Jewish state, we are still considered as being in Exile until the building of the Temple and the return of all Jews to the Holy Land.
7. Ibid, p.173.
8. See ibid, p.174 for an alternative explanation from Rav Glatstein.

MORE TO SAY ABOUT THE ‘WICKED’ AND THE ‘WISE’

KAREN WOLFERS-RAPAPORT (Chabad.org)

Meet the four sons: the wise son, the wicked one, the simple son and the son who does not know how to ask. As one of the most engaging sections of the Passover Haggadah, the four sons represent the kaleidoscope of perspectives we all bring to the table.

Choosing who sits next to whom at that table is not an easy task. There’s the varied personalities, diverging viewpoints and those always “interesting” family dynamics.

At the four sons’ Seder table, the wise son sits next to wicked.

On the face of it, it’s a strange choice. You would think that the simple son—or the one who does not know to ask—might sit next to the wise one. After all, though lacking in sophistication and cleverness, there appears to be a sincere interest in following the G-dly path in those brothers.

This is in contrast to the wicked son, who demonstrates a mocking contempt for the Torah. That son does not want to involve himself in Divine endeavors. He does not want to be part of communal life. He is cynical.

Despite this, the placement of the wicked son next to the wise is intentional. No son is truly “wicked.” Yes, his behavior may be misplaced, even egregious. But his essence, his soul, is still G-dly. The evil son sits next to the wise one because he is just one step away from him.

I think that’s worth repeating. The wicked son sits next to the wise son because he has more in common with him than not. The wicked son has the power to become just as erudite, just as “good” and just as content as the wise son, if he so chooses.

Can the wise son learn from his wicked brother sitting at his side? You bet!

For the wise son, the wicked son is a continual reminder that he must perpetually develop himself. There is no place for showmanship and self-aggrandizement in the life of the wise one. Why? Because one slip, one wrong move, could reorient his position as the “wicked” one.

Understanding the “wicked” and the “wise” has powerful consequences for our own lives.

Look to your side. Who is placed next to you at the Seder table, at the business meeting, at the restaurant, at school? Perhaps, if you are “wise,” your neighbor is a bit edgy, somewhat hardened by a challenged life. He may feel alienated, out of sorts with society. Maybe he has pushed the ethical boundaries. Maybe he has cheated on his taxes, followed his heart into an illicit relationship. Maybe he has convinced himself that plagiarizing is not the worst sin in the world.

It’s so easy to push an envelope, and if not for vigilance and awareness, it’s even easier to fall prey to “minor” indiscretions—and even major ones. If you’re wise, you realize that you could just have easily make the wrong choices. You could have chosen the wrong fork in the road and dabbled in that which you have no business dabbling. Knowing that you, too, could become “wicked” is a humbling reality.

If you are “wicked,” you may encounter someone of strong character at

your side. Perhaps they are able to apply their wisdom to help the world. Maybe they are responsible, and live lives of consequence and compassion. You could live that life, if you so choose.

But you may have to overhaul some entrenched life patterns. You may have to come to grips with the darker side of your personality. You may have to accept, let go and even surrender. But you have as much potential as your brother. You are one step away from being wise.

At the Seder table and beyond, the “wise” have a responsibility for those placed next to them. They have the ability to guide the “wicked” and help redress their ways. They have the know-how to demonstrate a different model of behavior. Fostering brotherhood, they can encourage others to be less estranged and alone. Alternatively, the wicked son needs to recognize who sits next to him. Through power of example, the wicked son is reminded of the power of change.

With effort, we have the potential to become wicked or wise. As sons—and daughters—we are just one step from one another. Turning to our side, we become one on Seder night.

(Adapted from Likkutei Sichos, Vol. I, Chag HaPesach, p. 247ff.)

WHO WE REALLY ARE

AVROHOM YAAKOV

One of the more famous sections of the Haggadah is the discussion of the four sons – the wise son, the wicked son, the simpleton, and the son who is unable to ask due to total ignorance of his Jewish heritage. These four sons are referenced in the Torah in relation to recounting the Exodus from Egypt. The text of the Haggadah on this topic however is problematic.

“The wise son, what does he says ... The wicked son, what does he say ... The simpleton, what does he say ...”

Since this is based on the Torah reference, why doesn’t the Haggadah use the same terminology as the Torah? “And it will be when you son will ask ...” (Shemos 13:17) “When your son will ask ...” (Devorim 6: 20)

Why doesn’t the Haggadah state that “the wise son asks ...” “the wicked son asks ...” words that mirrors the Torah’s words more closely?

The Lubavitcher Rebbe explains that the terminology of the Haggadah can be better understood as “the wise son, what he is, he says”. The words of the son reflect who he is. The wisdom is seen not merely by asking but by how he expresses his question. The same applies to the wicked son and the simpleton. Their words tell us who they are without even needing to describe the person who is asking the question.

The Haggadah is providing us with a life lesson. No matter how hard a person tries to conceal what he or she are, eventually their words and actions reflect the true person, whether they are wise, wicked or simple, they will show their true colours.

This truth can be seen both at the interpersonal level and at the macro level in world events.

However, the fact that the Haggadah suggests a response, tells us that while change is difficult, it is possible. Why answer the wicked son harshly when he clearly is starting from a position of being antagonistic to his parents, family and traditions? Why reply to the simpleton if he won’t understand?

Nevertheless we still try and hold the hope that there will be a positive change.

THE MARSHMALLOWS OF THE FUTURE

RABBI LABEL LAM (Torah.org)

And it will come to pass if your son asks you tomorrow, saying, “What is this?” you shall say to him, “With a mighty hand did HASHEM our G-d take us out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. (Shemos 13:14)

if your son asks you in the future: The Hebrew word “machar” sometimes means “now” and sometimes means in the future. – Rashi

If your son asks you tomorrow, saying, “What are the testimonies, the statutes, and the ordinances, which HASHEM our G-d has commanded you?” (Devarim 6:20)

If your son asks you tomorrow: There is a “machar”- “tomorrow” that means in the future -Rashi

Here we have the source for two of the four sons spoken about at the Pesach Seder. It’s the simple one who asks, “What is this?” and the wise one that asks “What are the testimonies, the statutes, and the ordinances, which the HASHEM our G-d has commanded you?” From a subtle verbal cue, the father has to determine which medicine to administer to which son. Curiously both are introduced in the Torah with a phrase, “If or when your child asks you tomorrow...”. In each situation Rashi tells us something different about that word “tomorrow”. In one place, by the simple son, he says that tomorrow can sometimes mean literally tomorrow, immediately after today and sometimes it means in the far future. By the wise son Rashi just offers the second meaning of tomorrow that it refers to the distant future. Why does Rashi give two differing definitions for the very same

word?

The Talmud tells us that one of the key-identifying signs of a wise person is their ability to see and anticipate the future. The Sefer Cheshbon HaNefesh writes that the nature of the animal aspect of the human soul is to be absorbed only in the present. He sees what he wants and forgets about everything and everybody else. On the other hand, the G-dly soul is transcendent and can factor in to his decisions the past and the future beyond his lifetime.

There was a famous psychological experiment that was done many decades ago that revealed dramatic and telling results. It was famously titled the “Marshmallow Experiment”. The basic gist was that children were offered the option of having a marshmallow now or more later. All of the children made one of those two choices and were written into the category of either the “marshmallow now” or “marshmallows later” group. The children were followed throughout their lifetimes until adulthood and those who were able to defer gratification and preferred the “marshmallows later” achieved disproportionately more than the other group. As a principal, whenever I would interview children for entry into school, I would always ask the child if they would like a candy now or two later when we are done. I never used it as the basis of acceptance but their answer told me something about their nature.

When talking to young people I would often employ the following powerful rhetorical device because it opens up a different part of their mind. I would say something like this, “I am not speaking to you now as you are sitting here today. Rather I am speaking to you twenty and forty years from now when you will be sitting around the Pesach Seder with your wife and your children and grandchildren. Then you will know how your parents and grandparents feel about you and you will begin to understand how much HASHEM loves us. You may remember that an old man with a white beard told you it would be so and how right he was.”

History meets destiny at the Pesach Seder. The past intersects and dances with the future. The farther one can see into the past, the farther they can see into the future. The wise son wants to know about all the types of laws that were gifted through his father and to the Jewish People at Mt. Sinai. He is asking about the past. His tomorrow is a tomorrow of the future. The simple son is asking about the present, “What is this”, in front of him. He may miss the grand sweep of history and drown in the cultural currents of the present. His tomorrow may only be about what he is doing the next day. We need to help him to focus on the marshmallows of the future.

NEXT YEAR IN JERUSALEM . . . REALLY!

RABBI ARON MOSS (Chabad.org)

Question:

Here’s one I always wanted to know. We traditionally end the Passover Seder with the wish, “Next Year in Jerusalem!” What if you’re living in Jerusalem? Do you say, “This year in Jerusalem!” or just leave that line out?

Answer:

You can be miles away from Jerusalem even while living there. And you can be on the other side of the world but only a step away. Because Jerusalem is much more than a city. It’s an ideal that we are struggling to reach.

The Jewish story can be summed up as a long journey from Egypt to Jerusalem. Beyond being just geographical locations, they symbolize two opposite spiritual states. The journey from Egypt to Jerusalem is a spiritual odyssey. Both as a nation and as individuals, we have always been leaving the slavery of Egypt and heading towards the freedom of the Promised Land. By analyzing the psychological Egypt and the inner Jerusalem, we will see how this is a road that we are still traveling.

The Hebrew name for Egypt is Mitzrayim, which means limitations, restrictions, obstacles. It represents a state in which our souls are trapped in our bodies, enslaved to material desires and tied down to physical limitations. It is a world in which righteousness, justice and holiness are held captive to corruption, selfishness and egotism.

Jerusalem means “the city of peace”—a place of peace between body and soul, heaven and earth, the ideal and reality. When our body becomes not a prison for the soul but rather a vehicle for the soul’s expression; when we live our lives according to our ideals rather than our cravings; when the world values goodness and generosity over selfish gain—then we are in Jerusalem, we are at peace with ourselves and the world.

Imagine you are in your car, stuck in heavy traffic. You are late for an important meeting, and you see someone struggling to enter your lane from a side street. You are faced with a choice: to be kind and let them in, or to remain preoccupied with your own pressing needs and drive on.

If you do not allow them in, justifying yourself by thinking of how late you are, then you’re still in Egypt; your selfishness has overtaken your goodness. If you overcome your concern for your own needs and let them in, you have just left Egypt. You allowed your innate goodness to prevail over your

instinctive selfishness. You're out of Egypt, but you're not yet in Jerusalem. In Jerusalem, you would automatically want to let them in. Your important meeting would pale into insignificance in comparison with an opportunity to do a favor for another person. You wouldn't have to conquer your selfish nature; your nature would itself be kind and selfless. There would be no need for a battle to do good in the city of inner peace; it would come naturally. I don't know about you, but I am not there yet.

The Jewish people were born in Egypt, in slavery. But they were told that on the other side of a vast desert lies their destiny, their Promised Land. As our forefathers walked out of Egypt—3323 years and some-odd weeks ago—they were taking the first steps of a long journey to Jerusalem. Every generation since has pushed further forward along the road to Jerusalem. The journey continues with us. But we haven't got there yet. Even if you are living in the city called Jerusalem, as long as there remains suffering, injustice and unholiness in the world, we haven't reached the Promised Land. As long as we remain slaves to our own negative instincts and selfish desires, we are still struggling to truly leave Egypt.

As we sit at the Seder, we note that another year has gone by, and we have yet to complete the journey. But we are getting there. We are that much closer to the Promised Land than we were last year. We have advanced a few more steps in a march to freedom that has spanned generations.

Perhaps this year, our efforts to better ourselves and our world will bring the fulfillment of the words of the Haggadah:

This year we are here, next year we will be in the Land of Israel. This year we are slaves, next year we will be free.

Next year in Jerusalem . . . literally.

News & Views

ISRAEL IS OFFERING TO GIVE AID DIRECTLY TO GAZANS. HAMAS REJECTS IT. SO WHO, EXACTLY, IS BLOCKING AID AGAIN?

ELDER OF ZIYON (ElderofZiyon.blogspot.com 9-4-25)

Hamas' Felesteen reports:

The Government Media Office Rejects Dangerous Proposals and Mechanisms for Distributing Humanitarian Aid in Gaza

The [Hamas] Government Media Office affirmed its categorical rejection of attempts to impose "dangerous" proposals and mechanisms for distributing humanitarian aid in the Gaza Strip, which would involve Israeli occupation soldiers or private companies affiliated with the occupation directly distributing aid to Palestinian families. In a press statement issued on Tuesday, the Government Office stated that "this mechanism is rejected in both form and content, constitutes a flagrant violation of international humanitarian law, and fundamentally contradicts the core principles of humanitarian action: neutrality, impartiality, independence, and humanity."

The government media official appealed to donor countries to "refrain from channeling their aid through the dangerous and unacceptable mechanism proposed by the Israeli occupation, and to commit to delivering it through credible humanitarian channels, foremost among them the United Nations, as it is a neutral and independent body with a long history of working in the Gaza Strip in accordance with international standards." He further called on the entire world to "ensure that humanitarian aid reaches our steadfast Palestinian people safely and with dignity, rejecting all attempts to tamper with their humanitarian fate."

Hamas claims that Israel directly giving food would be "illegal" and "dangerous" for Gazans.

But meanwhile, Hamas and its fans say Israel has the legal obligation to provide aid. If that is true, Israel can do so in any way it wants. Hamas rejection doesn't mean it is a principled position - if you believe them, Gazans are starving - but a means to continue to control, confiscate and resell aid to enrich Hamas.

As far as "dangerous" is concerned, Hamas cannot ever be accused of caring about the lives of Gazans.

The thing is, Hamas knows that the UN or other NGOs aren't going to criticize them. They will always direct their barbs at only Israel. This means Hamas can continue to frame these as unacceptable demands.

Starving people don't make demands.

Hamas' own media is admitting that Israel if offering a way to bring in food. It is admitting that it is rejecting that aid. How much clearer can things be?

HAMAS DEMANDED \$500M FROM IRAN FOR DESTRUCTION OF ISRAEL

ISRAEL HAYOM (JNS.org 6-4-25)

Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz revealed, for the first time, communications between Tehran and slain Hamas leaders Mohammed Deif and Yahya Sinwar.

"This is definitive proof of Iran's support for Hamas's plan to destroy Israel

and for the October 7, [2023], massacre," Katz said. "Deif and Sinwar demanded \$500 million from the Quds Force commander to support the annihilation of Israel and the fight against the U.S.—and they got it."

Katz visited the IDF's Intelligence and Technological Systems Unit (AMASHT) on Saturday and received a briefing from unit commanders on its intelligence and operational activities.

"I'm here today visiting the AMASHT unit—a special unit established during the Swords of Iron war and composed of reservists with extensive civilian-sector expertise, who developed national-level capabilities that did not yet exist," he said.

He added that this intelligence capability holds critical material physically collected from deep inside enemy territory, including Hamas archives, Hezbollah documents and other sensitive intelligence sources.

"Today I am presenting, for the first time, a transcript of conversations found in the tunnels of senior Hamas officials in Gaza, which proves a direct connection between Iran and Yahya Sinwar and Mohammed Deif, as part of Iran's support for Hamas's plan to destroy Israel. The document shows they requested \$500 million from the commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps' Quds Force to help destroy the State of Israel," Katz said.

According to the document, the head of the Quds Force's Palestinian Affairs Branch, Hassan Izadi, responded affirmatively to the request, saying that despite Iran's dire economic situation and the hardships faced by the Iranian people, the regime would continue funding Hamas, because the fight against Israel and the U.S. remains the regime's top priority.

Katz concluded, "Iran is the head of the snake. Despite all its denials, it continues to finance and promote terrorism across all fronts—from Gaza, Lebanon and Syria to Judea and Samaria, and now even with the Houthis in Yemen—all under the banner of Israel's destruction.

"Israel will do whatever is necessary to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons and will continue to strike at its proxies across the region until the Iranian axis of evil is dismantled and defeated."

THE UN'S WAR ON JEWISH SUCCESS

ELDER OF ZIYON (ElderofZiyon.blogspot.com 3-4-25)

Jews have been accused of the worst crimes of each era: killing G-d, poisoning wells, controlling governments, staging world wars.

Today the accusations are just as ludicrous, but they are mounted faster than ever. Perhaps the most visible source of antisemitism today is the international community and non-governmental organizations.

Since the United Nations was created, the world has gone through phases of condemning highly publicized crimes - and sooner or later, Israel gets accused of the same crimes.

Colonialism changed from acceptable to criminal in the years after World War II. The Arab nations accused Israel of colonialism before Israel even existed. Abdul Rahman Hassan Azzam, the chairman of the Arab League, said to the Anglo American Commission in 1946, "The Zionist, the new Jew, wants to dominate and he pretends that he has got a particular civilizing mission with which he returns to a backward, degenerate race in order to put the elements of progress into an area which wants no progress. Well, that has been the pretension of every power that wanted to colonize and aimed at domination."

Racism became the new evil in the 1960s, with the civil rights era. By 1975, UN passed a resolution declaring Zionism a form of racism.

In the 1980s, states began sanctions against South Africa for its apartheid policies. The 2001 Durban conference, organized during the 1990s, accused Israel of apartheid

More recently, the number of accusations against Israel have turned into a tsunami: if white supremacism is bad, then Israel must be guilty of "Jewish supremacism." If genocide is the ultimate evil, then Israel must be guilty of that heinous crime.

It was not only UN resolutions that have been hijacked just to be used as ammunition against Israel. International law itself has been changed just for Israel and Israel alone. The Rome Statute changed language from the Geneva Conventions to apply specifically to Israeli settlements - and in doing so it elevated the status of Jews building homes on their ancestral homeland, the most anti-colonial act one can imagine, into a war crime.

The UN Commission on Human Rights became increasingly anti-Israel year after year. From the 1970s through 2002, fully one third of its country-specific resolutions were directed at Israel, while it ignored the worst violators of human rights. In 2002, during the height of the spree of terror attacks that was murdering hundreds of Israelis, it passed a resolution not to condemn Palestinian suicide bombers but to affirm the "legitimate right of the Palestinian people to resist the Israeli occupation."

The world's human rights body all but legitimized terror.

The UNCHR was disbanded in 2006, not because of its anti-Israel focus but because it consistently elected members of the worst human rights

violators, including Sudan during its ethnic cleansing in Darfur. The two are related, though: when anti-Israel and pro-terror policies become normalized by international bodies, it never ends there.

The UNCHR's replacement, the United Nations Human Rights Council, is even worse. Beyond its massively disproportionate obsession with Israel in its resolutions, it also has a standing item on its agenda, item 7, dedicated to criticizing Israel. No other nation has such an item. Moreover, in 2021 the UNHRC established a permanent Commission of Inquiry (COI) against Israel that is the first and only such COI that has no time limit. Millions of dollars are spent every year by this commission alone.

The UN works closely with non governmental organizations. Human rights organizations like Amnesty and Human Rights Watch share the UN's obsession with Israel, dedicating more and larger reports accusing Israel of more crimes than any other nation over time. Amnesty's report on mass murders, rapes and displacements of civilians in Darfur in 2016 was only slightly longer than their report condemning Airbnb for allowing listings of Jewish-owned homes in Judea and Samaria in 2019. Their priorities are immoral.

There is literally no aspect of human existence that is not weaponized against Israel. The Palestinians have signed international treaties that they admit they have no interest in upholding but their meetings are ideal places to attack Israel for its supposed violations of environmental rights, women's rights, children's rights, preserving the oceans. The world soccer federation FIFA is forced by their rules to debate Israel's membership endlessly at the behest of Israel's enemies.

Institutions like the UN and major NGOs promote a universalist vision of global norms that are meant to override and supersede traditional notions of national sovereignty. They say that they must to this to enforce minimal human rights standards, but the examples of major human rights violators that can force their own agendas on world bodies prove that politics trumps the honesty, fairness and equality they claim to be fighting for.

Their disproportionate focus on Israel reveal more than this, though. Once you look past their distortions and lies, it becomes clear that Israel is a shining success story of human rights and of liberal ideals. It is especially impressive given the constant war footing forced on the Jewish state. Israel's ability to maintain its security in the face of international laws that are applied to it alone; its ability to provide equal rights to its Arab minority, its heroic attempts to minimize civilian casualties among its enemies under the most difficult wartime circumstances any Western nation ever faced, shows that it isn't Israel's failings that cause such unbridled hate - but Israeli success.

The UN and NGOs have utterly failed to change the attitudes and activities of the worst human rights violators. They are not merely impotent in the face of the crimes against humanity - they tacitly accept them.

Meanwhile, a particularist Jewish state succeeds where even the most admired countries fail. This Jewish and Israeli success is a threat to their philosophy.

Nearly every nation in the Middle East declare themselves to be Arab and/or Muslim states without any concern from the UN and NGOs. They consider the Jewish state, however, to be a violation of their ideals. The reason isn't because of Israel's self-definition but because of Israel's success at building a society of equal rights for all its citizens - something that these self-declared moral arbiters cannot accept.

AUSTRALIA: HEADING FOR JIHADIST CONFLICT

NILS A. HAUG (GateStoneinstitute.org 6-4-25)

The happy-go-lucky country of Australia, located at the far-end of the globe, away from the geopolitical turmoil in Europe and the Middle East, is a peaceful and pleasant place to live – or should be.

Most of the immigrants seem to have assimilated comfortably, enjoying generous benefits such as state-sponsored medical care, welfare packages, high wages, vast open spaces and low crime. Life is good in Australia, with thousands of applicants from all over the world keenly seeking a better life in the sun. Although with a relatively small population of some 25 million, four of its cities are currently rated among the world's top 20 most livable.

However, an undercurrent of extremist Islam exists within Australia's Middle Eastern community. This development exploded into the headlines when, in January 2025, a serious firebomb attack on a Jewish childcare facility in Sydney took place, not surprisingly causing horror among the peaceful community. When innocent children are threatened with death, it can be said that the jihadist-Islamist crisis in the country has finally arrived.

Anti-Semitic acts had, in fact, become common in Australia before January, with more than 2,000 incidents in 2024 alone. They included 65 physical assaults and 600 cases of verbal abuse. According to Mike Burgess, the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation's director-general for security, "Jewish Australians, are increasingly conflated with the state of Israel,

leading to an increase in anti-Semitic incidents."

"[T]he Israel-Gaza conflict has exacerbated antisemitic incidents in Australia" Burgess also said, thereby "giving extremists an excuse to escalate threats and violence.... communal violence is expected to rise over the next five years, further straining social cohesion."

According to Deborah Stone, editor-in-chief of The Jewish Independent news website:

"There are clearly extremists within the Islamic community and it is upon the broader Islamic community to do something about them and it is upon the multicultural authorities and the people who fund them to make sure that those extremists are not allowed to influence the broader attitude of their communities."

It seems rather naïve of Stone to expect the "broader Islamic community" to assist in erasing this view from within their community.

The Australian government, led by Prime Minister Anthony Albanese of the leftist Labour Party, called an emergency cabinet meeting in January to address the crisis. At the time, the Federal Police taskforce was "investigating at least 105 anti-Semitic attacks." To date, no convictions have resulted for these offenses, including the firebombing of a major synagogue, causing its destruction.

It is understandable that the Jewish community in Australia is highly distressed by the support given by "Muslim and pro-Palestinian groups to the actions of Hamas, which openly desires to destroy the Israeli state." This support has become clear from the vociferous pro-Hamas protests such as the one that took place at the iconic Sydney Opera House on October 9, 2023.

The murderous jihadist ideology of Jew-hatred regrettably seems to know no bounds. The apparent normalization of jihadist-Islamist radicals, such as Hamas and Hezbollah, became frighteningly real when a video revealed that two Muslim immigrant nurses working in a Sydney hospital boasted that one of them had "killed Israeli patients" and the other had sworn to "let them die." The male nurse is recorded as saying, "you have no idea how many Israeli dogs came to this hospital and sent them to jahannam (hell)." The nurses were suspended pending an investigation.

At the end of February, nurse Sarah Abu Lebdeh was eventually charged with "three very, very serious offences" and awaits trial. The male nurse, Ahmad Rashad Nadir was arrested and charged in early March and awaits a court appearance date.

After local Sheikh Wesam Charkawi declared his support for the two nurses, "Pro-Palestinian teachers led dozens of schoolchildren in chants of 'Allahu Akbar' outside a western Sydney public school" in support. Charkawi, who is employed by the New South Wales Department of Education, was "ordered to work from home after defending the two nurses in an Instagram post."

Islamist indoctrination certainly starts at a young age. Activists such as the Teachers and School Staff for Palestine group actually encourage schoolchildren to get involved. The pro-Palestine cohort is active at the far-end of the world as well as in the northern arena, as their openly stated objective is a worldwide Islamic Caliphate based in Jerusalem.

As usual, the issue harkens back to Israel. According to The Jewish Independent:

"In his Instagram video, Sheik Charkawi... criticised the 'hypocrisy' of Anthony Albanese and NSW Health Minister Ryan Park for remaining silent 'when confronted with the most egregious acts of violence committed by Israel.'"

As has occurred in Scandinavian countries such as Sweden, or in many other countries in Europe, Islamic extremism in Australia is becoming brazen. When Salwan Momika, a Christian Iraqi immigrant who criticized jihad, was murdered in Sweden, the event was met online with applause. Sofie Löwenmark, an Arabic-speaking journalist and expert in Islamist extremism, "told media that the celebrations of Momika's murder are indescribable; there are 'tens of thousands of comments with shouts of joy.'"

Fortunately, Australia has not (yet) experienced the cold-blooded murder of a member of the Jewish community and hopefully the authorities can maintain control of the situation, as they have pledged to do.

None of Australia's jihadist Jew-hatred occurrences should come as a surprise. Official opposition leader Peter Dutton noted that the present Labour government irrationally brought in 3,000 migrants from Gaza, "without security checks."

"If you bring in people from a war zone controlled by a listed terror organisation and on tourist visas without checks, it's negligent at best.... This is an attack on civilisation."

Egyptian journalist Mouna Al-Hilmi explains that Islamic jihadist ideology exists for the precise purpose of eradicating Western civilization through world-wide "jihad to establish a global Islamic caliphate." Why, therefore, should Western nations be shocked when it becomes active and causes social chaos?

Australia's Islamist problem, sadly, can be laid squarely at the door of Albanese and his Foreign Minister Penny Wong, both of whom irrationally backed the recognition of a Palestinian state. Hence the relocation of 3,000 unvetted Gazans into Australia.

As Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu responded to the suggestion of an independent Palestinian state:

"There was a Palestinian state, it was called Gaza. Gaza, led by Hamas, was a Palestinian state and look what we got – the biggest massacre since the Holocaust."

Perhaps Australia's Labour Party leaders might take cognizance of Netanyahu's explanation of why the dangerous ideology of Palestinianism should be rejected, and act to protect their citizens from Islamist terror for generations to come?

ISRAEL'S HOSTAGES IN GAZA AND THE RABBI WHO WOULDN'T BE RANSOMED

VARDA MEYERS EPSTEIN (ElderofZiyon.blogspot.com 3-4-25)

Imagine a Jewish sage, Rabbi Meir of Rothenberg, locked in a 13th-century dungeon. The Holy Roman Emperor demands a ransom—a fortune the Jewish community is desperate to pay to redeem their captive sage. Rabbi Meir, meanwhile, will not permit his flock to pay his ransom.

Why? Because the Maharam of Rothenberg knew that this would set a precedent. Pay the ransom and Jewish leaders would always be targets for kidnapping.

Rabbi Meir endures seven years in captivity, then dies in prison. And still he is not free, not even in death. The corpse of the Maharam is held captive for a further 14 years; the final, lengthy indignity done to a true holy man. As distinct from his evil “Holy Roman” captor.

Rabbi Meir of Rothenberg's refusal to be ransomed is the story of a selfless, godly man who sacrificed one person, himself, to protect his people long-term. In their desire to redeem their sage, the Jewish community was heedless of the wider implications for the Jewish nation, as a whole. What Rabbi Meir did was beautiful and selfless. He stepped up for his people.

Now it is 2025, and Hamas is playing the same cruel stunt pulled so long ago by King Rudolf I, holding as bargaining chips an estimated 20-24 live hostages and 35 hostage corpses. The hostage families whatever the status of their loved ones, yearn for closure. Some of the hostage families already know their loved ones are dead in Gaza. They ache to bury them. Others pray their loved ones still cling to life. The not knowing is a torment. Rabbi Meir of Rothenberg would tell us not to blink—giving in only emboldens the enemy. But we blinked.

We blinked when we inked the Shalit deal. Then we set a precedent for now when we swapped over 1,000 murderers for Gilad Shalit, including Yahya Sinwar, the devious, truly evil mastermind of October 7.

It must be said: many of us were against the Shalit deal, despite the biased polls trumpeted by the biased MSM. We were way more than the measly 14% they cited. In fact, I knew very few people in favor of the Shalit deal. Why would anyone be in favor of releasing from prison a satanic monster like Ahlam al-Tamimi—someone who is gleeful to know that Jewish children died as a result of her evil machinations. Won't she just want to do it some more? Now imagine her times one thousand.

Before we released Yahya Sinwar from prison, in that same Shalit deal, we saved his life on Israel's dime. Fine Israeli surgeons removed his brain tumor in a world class hospital, and gave him another shot at destroying the Jewish people in a way the world would never forget. This should be a stark lesson for the Jews. Every terrorist we don't shoot on sight, will try to do it again.

Happily, Sinwar can no longer be said to be living proof of this, because he is no longer among the living. The Jews finally did the right thing and ended him for good.

Rabbi Meir of Rothenberg did not die only because of a principle. He died to stop a vicious loop. Which is where we are right now. Hamas thrives on our concessions—just think! The Shalit deal gave them Sinwar. The Witkoff deal has already given them many Sinwars.

It must be faced. Israel has shown it will release terrorists, many of them, for a single hostage. Then it all becomes a game of how many terrorists they can get for 50 Jews, most of them dead. It's true they prefer the live ones, but a live Jew will pay a lot for a dead Jew, too. And in fact, Israel has now released many, many terrorists from Israeli prisons—terrorists with a recidivism rate of 82%.

The Israeli dilemma, of course, is brutal: negotiate and maybe save some hostages and retrieve the bodies of the others, or fight to crush Hamas, and risk an endless round of October 7s.

If only we had someone with the Maharam's wisdom today. Someone who could advise us what to do now that we've effed messed up and set the precedent. One that can only lead to great bloodshed. There can be no

other outcome.

Each negotiation leads to a jackpot of thousands of terrorists. So why should Hamas let go the last of their bargaining chips, dead Jews and maybe two dozen live Jews. They are surely worth thousands of terrorists, many Sinwars let loose.

(Note: IDF soldier Avraham Amram was captured on April 5, 1978, in a clash with Palestinian PFLP-GC forces near Rashidieh camp in South Lebanon. He was exchanged in 1979 for 76 convicted Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli jails. It was the first time Israel negotiated directly with a terrorist organization. The Lubavitcher Rebbe strongly opposed this deal, saying that the price paid should not be higher than what other countries typically use in their prisoner swaps, citing a contemporary swap between the US and Soviet Union of two prisoners for five. But he went beyond that, saying that this crossed the red line of negotiating with terrorists who openly said they would continue their terrorism. Furthermore, said the Rebbe, putting terrorists in prison to begin with, rather than executing them, was a major mistake, since it encourages future kidnappings and invites pressure to release them at some point.

One of the prisoners released in that deal was Hafez Dalkamoni, who was the leader of a PFLP-GC cell in West Germany that was responsible for the bomb that brought down Pan Am flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland, in 1988, killing 270).

Kosher & Halacha Kerner

The following article may be at variance to local Kashrus Agencies. When in doubt, contact your local reputable Agency. In Australia, direct any questions to info@kosher.org.au or visit www.kosher.org.au

THE MITZVAH OF CHAROSET

RABBI CHAIM JACHTER (KolTorah.org)

The Mishna (Pesachim 114a) presents a disagreement between the Sages and Rav Elazar ben Tzadok as to whether Charoset constitutes a Mitzvah. The Sages argue that it does not, while Rav Elazar ben Tzadok argues that it does. The Gemara (Pesachim 116a) explains both of the opinions recorded in the Mishna. It explains that the Sages believe that Charoset merely serves to blunt the bitter taste of the Maror. The Gemara subsequently presents two explanations of Rav Elazar ben Tzadok's opinion. One explanation is that the Charoset serves to remind us of the mortar used by our ancestors in Egypt to build for Paroh when they were slaves. A second explanation is that the Charoset serves to remind us of the Tapuchim (apple trees) in Egypt. Rashi and Rashbam explain that the Jewish women in Egypt would painlessly and quietly give birth beneath the apple trees so that the Egyptians would not discover that a Jewish male was born.

We should note that the second explanation is the source of the practice of Ashkenazic Jews to use apples to make Charoset. Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik, (cited in Nefesh Harav pp. 209-210) however, argues that the word Tapuach refers to a citrus fruit such as an Etrog (see Tosafot Taanit 29b s.v. Shel Tapuchim, which supports Rav Soloveitchik's argument). Based on this point, Rav Hershel Schachter places a citrus fruit in his Charoset instead of apples. This practice is supported by the Gemara (Pesachim 116a), which mentions that since the Charoset serves as a reminder of the Tapuach, the Charoset should be acidic. Citrus fruits are distinctively acidic but apples are not.

The Gemara in Pesachim continues and teaches that we should add spices to the Charoset to remind us of the straw in Egypt. Before spices are ground up, they are long and stringy and thus resemble straw. The straw that we remember likely refers to the decree made by Paroh that we must gather our own straw for building (Shemot 5:7). The Gemara concludes with a quote from Rav Elazar ben Tzadok. He notes the practice of the merchants of Jerusalem, who would announce before Pesach, "Come and get spices for the sake of the Mitzva."

RISHONIM - TOSAFOT AND THE RAMBAM

Tosafot (s.v. Tagrei) notes that the practice of the Jerusalem merchants seems to indicate that the opinion of Rav Elazar ben Tzadok is accepted as normative. The merchants would have been corrected by one of Jerusalem's many sages if their announcements were Halachically inaccurate. Tosafot cites the celebrated poem of Rav Yosef Tuv Elem, which states that Charoset constitutes a Mitzva in accordance with Rav Elazar ben Tzadok's view.

In addition, Tosafot cites some additional sources that serve as the basis for our practice regarding the process of making Charoset. Tosafot cites the Talmud Yerushalmi that states that the Charoset serves as a reminder of the blood in Egypt. Tosafot notes that this is the source for adding wine to the Charoset. Tosafot also cites the Teshuvot Hageonim that states that the ingredients of the Charoset should reflect the food items that the Jewish People are compared to in Shir Hashirim. Included in this list are nuts and almonds, which Ashkenazic Jews customarily add to their Charoset. The

Rambam (Hilchot Chametz U'matza 7:11) mentions that raisins and dates should be included in the Charoset.

The Rambam's rulings regarding Charoset appear to be contradictory. In his commentary to the Mishna in Pesachim, he rules in accordance with the opinion of the sages that Charoset does not constitute a Mitzva. In the Mishna Torah (Hilchot Chametz U'matza 7:11), however, the Rambam rules in accordance with the view of Rav Elazar ben Tzadok that there is a rabbinical obligation to have Charoset at the table. The Lechem Mishna in his commentary to this Halacha notes the contradiction in the Rambam's rulings. He notes a second contradiction between what the Rambam writes in his commentary to the Mishna and in the Mishna Torah. In the commentary to the Mishna, the Rambam asserts that according to Rav Elazar ben Tzadok one must recite a Beracha upon consuming Charoset: "Al Achilat Charoset." However, in the Mishna Torah, where the Rambam rules in accordance with Rav Elazar ben Tzadok, the Rambam makes no mention of reciting a Beracha on the Charoset. The Lechem Mishna writes that the Rambam must have changed his mind from the time he wrote the commentary to the Mishna to the time he wrote the Mishna Torah. (We should note that the Rambam wrote the commentary to the Mishna as a very young man and wrote the Mishna Torah much later in life. Interestingly, Rav Aharon Adler, Rav in Ramot, Israel; has documented hundreds of instances in which the Rambam changed his mind from the commentary to the Mishna to his Mishna Torah in an unpublished doctoral dissertation for Bar Ilan University.)

RAV SOLOVEITCHIK'S EXPLANATION

Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik (cited in the Siach Hagrid 74-77) explains the conceptual basis for the Rambam's change. In the commentary to the Mishna, the Rambam believed that Rav Elazar ben Tzadok thought that it is a Mitzva to eat Charoset. Accordingly, Rav Elazar ben Tzadok would require us to recite a Beracha of "Al Achilat Charoset" on Charoset. The Rambam, in turn, does not rule in accordance with Rav Elazar ben Tzadok, since in practice the Rambam observed that no one recites a Beracha on Charoset. In the Mishna Torah, on the other hand, the Rambam believes that Rav Elazar ben Tzadok does not understand the Mitzva of Charoset to be one of eating the Charoset. Rather, the Mitzva is to have the Charoset present on the Seder table to enhance the recounting of the exodus from Egypt and to be available for dipping. Hence, even according to Rav Elazar ben Tzadok, we do not recite a Beracha upon Charoset since there is no Maaseh (specific concrete act of Mitzva performance) associated with this Mitzva other than its being present on the Seder table. Accordingly, since there is no common practice running counter to the opinion of Rav Elazar ben Tzadok, the Rambam accepts this opinion as normative, as indicated in Pesachim 116a.

PRACTICAL RAMIFICATION

Rav Soloveitchik's insight that there is no Mitzva to eat Charoset sheds light on the Shulchan Aruch's ruling (Orach Chaim 475:1) that the Charoset should be removed from the Maror before consuming the Maror. In addition, the Mishna Berura (475:17) rules that one should remove the Charoset from the Maror we use for Korech. Since the Charoset can neutralize the bitter taste of the Maror and there is no Mitzva to eat Charoset, Halacha requires that we remove the Charoset from the Maror.

Candles (Melb) Friday 11/4/25 13 Nissan 5785 5.41p/6.37p/6.35p/6.34p