

SUPPLEMENT

Notes To The הגדה

1. A ברכה Before Fulfilling the מצוה of סיפור יציאת מצרים;
2. A ברכה Before Reciting הלל During the סדר;
3. The Practice Of Reading The הגדה In Synagogue For Those Who Did Not Have Access To A הגדה Nor Knew Its Words From Memory.

1. A ברכה Before Fulfilling the מצוה of סיפור יציאת מצרים

Last שבת during שלש סעודות at the Young Israel of Hillcrest, I delivered a talk in which I compared the text of the הגדה that is in common use today and the text of the הגדה that followed מנהג ארץ ישראל, included in the Goldschmidt הגדה and known as the Dropsie Haggadah. My focus was on a ברכה found in the הגדה מנהג ארץ ישראל and not included in the current versions of the הגדה. The ברכה was recited after the ברכה of גאל ישראל and before the ברכה of לחם מן הארץ.

ברוך אתה ה' א-להינו מלך העולם אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו על אכילת מצה מרור בלילה הזה להזכיר גבורתו של מלך מלכי המלכים ברוך הוא שעשה נסים לאבותינו בזמן הזה בעבור אברהם יצחק ויעקב ברוך אתה ה' זוכר הברית. ברוך אתה ה' א-להינו מלך העולם המוציא לחם מן הארץ אמן.

Translation: Baruch Ata . . . who commanded us to eat Matzoh and Marror on this night to commemorate the great acts that G-d performed who undertook miracles on behalf of our ancestors in the merit of our forefathers, Avrohom, Yitzchok and Yaakov. Baruch Ata Hashem who fulfills His covenant.

I suggested that the ברכה provided an excellent definition of the מצוה of סיפור יציאת מצרים. After I concluded my remarks, one of those present, Rabbi Jerry Friedlander, expressed the opinion that the ברכה that I described, found in the הגדה כמנהג ארץ ישראל, represented a Halachic difference between the Jews of Babylonia and the Jews of ארץ ישראל; that the Jews of ארץ ישראל held that a ברכה for performing the מצוה of סיפור יציאת מצרים was required, while the Jews of Babylonia held that no ברכה needed to be recited over the מצוה of סיפור יציאת מצרים. He further suggested that the ברכה I had presented was the ברכה that was intended to be the ברכה that was recited before

performing the מצוה of סיפור יציאת מצרים. That thought had previously crossed my mind, but I rejected that possibility because the ברכה of זוכר הברית was recited after the ברכה of גאל ישראל and in my opinion the ברכה of גאל ישראל brought the מצוה of סיפור יציאת מצרים to a close. Rabbi Friedlander's remark caused me to reconsider. I then recognized that another point that I had made resolved this issue. I noted that in מנהג ארץ ישראל, they did not recite separate ברכות for the מצוות of מצה and מרור because in their view, those two מצוות were subsets of the מצוה of סיפור יציאת מצרים. In other words, eating מצה and eating מרור were part of the מצוה of סיפור יציאת מצרים. I presented support for that position by suggesting that if a person were to come home to the סדר and choose to skip the מצוה of סיפור יציאת מצרים but still perform the מצוות of מצה and מרור, he in fact would not have fulfilled the מצוות of מצה and מרור because those מצוות cannot be carried out without performing the מצוה of סיפור יציאת מצרים. In that case, all he did was to eat food but he did not fulfill any מצוות. Therefore the placement of the ברכה in מנהג ארץ ישראל before eating מצה and מרור was an appropriate point at which to recite the ברכה because the performance of the מצוה of סיפור יציאת מצרים had not yet been completed.

One other difference between מנהג ארץ ישראל and מנהג בבל may provide additional support to the suggestion that the ברכה of זוכר הברית is the ברכה to be recited over performing the מצוה of סיפור יציאת מצרים. The difference in practice concerns the rule that a ברכה must be recited before performing a מצוה. מנהג ארץ ישראל held that the ברכה over a מצוה can be said at any time during the performance of the מצוה. Since the ברכה of זוכר הברית was being recited before eating מצה and מרור, it fulfilled the requirement within מנהג ארץ ישראל that the ברכה be recited during the course of fulfilling the מצוה. That מנהג ארץ ישראל held that a ברכה over a מצוה can be recited during the performance of a מצוה can be seen from the following⁵:

תלמוד ירושלמי מסכת ברכות פרק ט' דף יד' טור א' /ה"ג-מצות, אימתי מברך עליהן? רבי יוחנן אמר עובר לעשייתן; רב הונא אמר: בשעת עשייתן. אתיא דרב הונא כשמואל דאמר רבי יוסי בי ר' בון בשם שמואל כל המצות טעונות ברכה בשעת עשייתן חוץ מתקיעה וטבילה.

Translation: When performing Mitzvos, when should the Bracha be recited? Rabbi Yochanon said: before performing the Mitzvah. Rabbi Huna said: while performing the Mitzvah. Rabbi Huna followed the opinion of Shmuel as we find Rabbi Yosse son of Rabbi Bun say in the name of Shmuel: Concerning all Mitzvos, a Bracha must be recited while performing the Mitzvah except for the Mitzvos of Shofar blowing and immersing oneself in a Mikveh.

5. A further example is found in הלכה ד' פרק כ' הלכה ד' מסכת סופרים concerning lighting candles on חנוכה.

2. A ברכה Before Reciting הלל During the סדר

Last year, I distributed a page from a הגדה that provided for a ברכה to be recited before saying הלל at the סדר. What I have not yet uncovered is an example of a הגדה that provides for the recital of a ברכה over each part of הלל as described in the following:

טור אורה היים הלכות פסח סימן תעג'—בענין ברכת ההלל איכא פלוגתא דרבנותא ריעב"א היה מברך עליו ב"פ, אחת קודם אכילה, ואחת אחר אכילה, וכן היה נוהג ה"ר מאיר מרוטנבורק וכ"כ רב האי ורב צמח ורב עמרם אבל הרי"ף גיאת ואבי העזרי כתבו שאין לברך עליו כלל לפי שחולקים אותו לשנים לפני הסעודה ולאחריה וא"כ האיך יברכו כיון שפוסקים באמצע וכן היה נוהג א"א הרא"ש ז"ל וכן ראוי לעשות בכל דבר שיש ספק בברכתו שאין לברך דברכות אינן מעכבות.

Translation: Concerning the requirement to recite a Bracha before saying Hallel at the Seder, there is a disagreement between Rabbis. The Ritzba would recite two Brachos, one before the section of Hallel that is recited prior to the meal and one before the section recited after the meal. So too the Maharam M'Rottenberg, Rav Hai Gaon, Rav Tz'emach Gaon, and Rav Amrom Gaon conducted themselves. But the Ritz Gayis and Avi Ha'Ezri (Ravya) wrote that a Bracha should not be recited because we split the recital of Hallel into two; one part being recited before the meal and a second part being recited after the meal; on what basis can we recite a Bracha if we pause between the recital of the two parts. That is how my father, the Rosh conducted himself. It is appropriate to omit a Bracha in any circumstance in which a person is in doubt as to whether he should be reciting a Bracha because the failure to recite a Bracha does not nullify the performance of the Mitzvah.

What were the two ברכות?

ספר אור זרוע ח"ב – הלכות פסחים סימן רנו'—וקורא עד חלמיש למעינו מים ומברך לקרוא ההלל ולא לגמור לפי שמפסיקין אותו בסעודה אע"פ שגומרין אותו אח"כ אינו יוצא מכלל קורין כמו יהא חלקי עם גומרי הלל בכל יום וכן ותיקין היו גומרין אותה. ותיקנו לשון גומרין כדי להבחין בימים שגומרין לימים שמדלגין לכך תקנו גאונים שאין מברכין לגמור כ"א לקרוא בקורא בפסוקי דתורה. ובלא לנו צריך לברך לגמור את ההלל לפי שהאכילה היתה הפסק בין הברכה הראשו', ומאודך כופלין עד יהללוד.

Translation: We read until: Chalamish L'Mayno Mayim and we recite the Bracha of Likro Ha'Hallel and not Ligmor since we create a pause by eating a meal between the recital of the two parts of Hallel. The fact that we will be completing the recital of Hallel after the meal does not preclude us from reciting the Bracha of Likro. The word Ligmor is synonymous with the word Likro as found in the statement in the Gemara: may I be among those who "read" (finish?) the book of Tehillim each day. Also we find in the Gemara a reference to the righteous reciting (finishing?) Kriyas Shema each day with sunrise. Why use the word: Ligmor if it means Likro (read)? In order to distinguish between those days in which the complete

6. In last week's newsletter we saw that the word: לגמור was synonymous with the word: לקרוא. When used as the ברכה before reciting the second half of the הגדה at the סדר, the word: לגמור clearly means: to finish; its common definition.

Hallel is recited and those days on which we omit portions of Hallel. That is why the Gaonim instituted the practice of using the word Likro instead of Ligmor; to signify that it is like reading verses from the Torah. Before starting the second part of Hallel that begins with the words: Lo Lanu, one should recite the Bracha of Ligmor Ha'Hallel because the meal created a pause between the two parts of Hallel. From the verse of Odcha to the end of Hallel, we recite every verse twice.

3. A Public Reading Of The הגדה In Synagogue For Those Who Did Not Have A הגדה Nor Knew Its Words From Memory.

I came across the availability of the Prato הגדה in a e-mailing by Dan Wyman Books, www.DanWymanBooks.com. He described the הגדה as follows:

The Prato Haggadah (Spain, ca.1300) is an unfinished illuminated manuscript of 85 leaves, written on fine calf parchment. Folios 1–53 are written in a square Sephardic script and folios 54–68 are written in a square Italo-Ashkenazic script, using a different ink.

A companion volume to the הגדה, published by the Jewish Theological Seminary in 2007, provides the following description of the Prato הגדה:

The text of the Prato Haggadah is also distinctive. Although it includes the standard biblical, talmudic, and midrashic texts, as well as the liturgical poetry common to other Spanish Haggadot, the Prato Haggadah lacks all elements associated with the Passover meal. Kiddush, blessings for matzah and maror, instructions for the feast itself, and grace after meals are absent. Scholars have suggested that Haggadot of this kind may have been written to be read publicly in the synagogue, after which people would return to their homes for the meal. This phenomenon is found in other Spanish Haggadot and is explained by medieval sources as satisfying the requirement to recount the story of the Exodus for people unable to lead or attend a seder.

I was intrigued by the suggestion that at one time a public reading of the הגדה took place in synagogues in order to assist some in the community to fulfill the מצוה of סיפור יציאת מצרים. I have not found any other sources that verify that such a practice ever took place. I am enlisting your help in identifying any sources that spoke of the practice. I did find the following concerning הלל:

תוספתא מסכת פסחים (ליברמן) פרק י'–הלכה ח'–בני העיר שאין להן מי שיקרא את ההלל הולכין לבית הכנסת וקורין פרק ראשון והולכין ואוכלין ושותין וחוזרין ובאין וגומרין את כולו. ואם אי אפשר להן גומרין את כולו ההלל אין פוחתין ממנו ואין מוסיפין עליו.

Translation: The members of the community who do not have a person at home who can read the Hallel out loud for them go to synagogue and hear the first part of Hallel being read aloud. Then they go home and eat their meal. They then return to synagogue and hear the remaining part of Hallel. If it is not possible for them to return to synagogue, they should read the whole Hallel before the meal. No part of Hallel should be omitted and no part should be added.