

A GUIDE FOR MAGGID – Part Three
[revised 5769]

Should Passover be understood as our 'holiday of freedom' - a special time set aside to thank God for taking us out of slavery?

Certainly, the popular song of "avadim hayinu... ata benei chorin" ['We were once slaves, but now we are free'] - seems to state exactly that point.

However, when you **read** your Haggada carefully, you'll notice that those words never appear (in that combination). And if you **study** the Haggada, you'll notice that it states quite the opposite, i.e. that we remain 'servants', but we simply have a new 'boss'!

So why do we recite "avadim hayinu"?

In the following shiur (Part Three of our series in on MAGID), as we study MAGID section by section, we will show how that paragraph, and many others like it, take on special meaning when we consider the psukim in Chumash that they are based on.

[Attached to the shiur is a pdf file with many of the mekorot that we will be discussing. It is very important to look up **and study** all the sources that we quote; otherwise, it will be difficult to follow our explanations]

Some of this study may appear a bit tedious, but if you study those sources carefully, hopefully it will help make your Seder a little more interesting.

THE MISHNA in Mesechet PESACHIM

The Mishna in the tenth chapter of Mesechet Pesachim sets some guidelines concerning how to fulfill this obligation 'to tell the story', including one that deals with its format:

"matchilim bi-gnut u-mesayim be-shevach" -

- We begin our story with a derogatory comment, and conclude it with praise.

In the Gemara's subsequent discussion (see Pesachim 116a), we find two opinions concerning what this opening comment should be:

- **Rav** - "Mi-tchila ovdei avoda zara..." - At first, our ancestors were idol worshipers..."
- **Shmuel** - "Avadim hayinu..." - We were once slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt..."

At the simplest level, it seems that Rav & Shmuel argue concerning what is considered a more derogatory statement- i.e. the fact that we were once slaves, or the fact that we once idol worshipers. However, this dispute may also relate to a more fundamental question - concerning **where** the story of Yetziat Mitzrayim actually begins - from our slavery in Egypt (Shmuel), or from the time of our forefathers (Rav).

In our previous shiur, we explained how we actually quote both of these opinions in our Haggada, but not as the starting point of the story. Rather they serve as important statements of purpose, while the story itself doesn't begin until we recite "arami oved avi".

[See Rambam Hilchot chametz u'matza 7:4 – read his closing remarks carefully, and you'll see that he makes exactly this point – that "arami oved avi" follows the format of matchilim b'gnut u'msayem b'shvach – and hence we follow this format when we recite "arami oved avi"!

Based on this Rambam, one could also suggest that Rav & Shmuel are only bringing proofs (or examples) from Tanach of this format (see Yehoshua 24:1-12 and Devarim 6:20-25 to support this), but do not claim that these are the words that we need to recite when we tell the story.]

With this in mind, we return to a detailed study MAGGID, to discuss certain points that were not covered in the previous shiurim.

'HA LACHMA ANYA'

As we explained earlier, the opening paragraph of MAGGID - 'ha lachma anya...' does not begin the story of Yetziat Mitzrayim; but rather it serves as a beautiful segue between "YACHATZ" and MAGID. Let's explain why, by considering the psukim in Chumash that it alludes to:

In YACHATZ, the leader of the Seder breaks the matza and then, while showing this broken piece to everyone who has gathered, he explains:

"ha LACHMA ANYA – This is the 'bread of affliction' that our forefathers ate in Egypt."

Check the various translations of the phrase "lachma anya" and you will usually find one of two translations:

1) bread of affliction [as in "inui" – affliction]

(see Breishit 15:13, Shmot 3:7 & 3:17)

Or 2) poor-man's bread [as in an "ani" – a poor person]

(see Shmot 22:24, Vayira 19:9-10)

The source for this phrase is obviously based on the laws of Korban Pesach in Parshat Re'ay:

"Observe the spring month and offer a Pesach for God...

For seven days, eat 'upon it' matza - '**lechem oni**' – ki b'chipazon yazata m'Mitzraim – [translation unclear] (see Devarim 16:1-3)

Rashi explains that "lechem oni" is not describing what the bread is, but rather what the bread represents:

"lechem oni" - **the bread that reminds us of our affliction**

[See Rashi and Ibn Ezra on 16:3 – note also how Seforno and Chizkuni disagree, claiming that 'lechem oni' explains what matza is – the bread of a poor. However, by comparing Devarim 16:3 to Shmot 13:3-8, it's obvious that Rashi and Ibn Ezra are correct.]

But even before Bnei Yisrael left Egypt, there was another commandment to eat matza – together with the Korban Pesach! So what does this "lachma anya" refer to:

The matza that we ate as slaves in Egypt;

The matza that we ate with the first Korban Pesach; or

The matza that we ate when we left Egypt in a rush -

To answer this question, let's take a look at how this paragraph continues:

The next statement (right after 'ha lachma anya') - at first sounds like an invitation:

"Anyone who is hungry, let him come and eat, anyone who is in need, let him come and join in the Pesach, this year 'here', next year in the Land of Israel; this year - slaves, next year - free men"

This statement can be understood in one of two ways, either:

- an open invitation for others to join us. - or
- a quote of what our forefathers once said to one another in Egypt.

These two possibilities depend on how one understands the word "v'yifsach" in the phrase "kol ditzrich yete v'yifsach" [anyone who needs, let him come and join our Pesach].

If we take the word "va'yifsach" literally, then this must be an invitation to join in the korban Pesach - and hence, it must be a quote from an earlier time period.

If "va'yifsach" is not translated literally (and hence refers to the Seder) - then this section serves as an invitation at this time. However, this wouldn't make much sense, for at this time at the Seder everyone is already sitting down. Considering that we've already made Kiddush and eaten "karpas" - isn't it a bit late to be inviting people!

Let's return therefore to the possibility that "va'yifsach" refers to the actual 'korban Pesach' (which seems to be the simple meaning of this word). If so, we can easily pinpoint exactly who we are quoting – by finding a time period when people invited one another to join in korban Pesach; but also when we were **not yet living in Israel**, and still in slavery!

There aren't too many possibilities, as this can only be a quote of what our forefathers said to one another in preparation for the very first korban Pesach (i.e. the one in Egypt, as described in Shmot 12:1-23), for that was the only time in Jewish history when the korban Pesach was offered when we were both:

- (1) in slavery (hoping next year to be free) - and
- (2) living outside the Land of Israel (hoping be next year in the Land of Israel)!

If this interpretation is correct, then the flow of topic makes perfect sense. We break the matza, and explain that this is the same type of bread that our forefathers ate when they gathered to eat the very first korban Pesach – back in Egypt! Then we quote what they said to one another in preparation for that special evening – inviting one another to that meal (see Shmot 12:3-8), and expressing the hope that by next year they will be in free (see 12:12-13), and living in the land of Israel (see Shmot 3:6-8 and 3:16-17).

This quote of our forefathers, from the very first Seder in Jewish History, is quite meaningful - for we begin MAGGID by emphasizing the connection between our own Seder and the very first Seder that Am Yisrael kept thousands of years ago (and its purpose). By quoting from the special atmosphere of that very first Passover family gathering, we highlight the continuity of our tradition and our hope for the fulfillment of its goals.

MAH NISHTANA

Even though this section is often referred to as 'The Four Questions', there is really only **one** question; i.e. – 'Why is this night different?' Because we have done so many things to catch his attention, the child obviously realizes something special is happening. Therefore, after asking 'the one question'; he brings four examples/proofs to support his claim that tonight is indeed different.

It is for this reason that we never answer these 'four questions'; Rather, Maggid continues with the answer to the 'one question' – of why this night is special.

[This section is based not only on the Mishnayot in the Tenth perek of Mesechet Pesachim, but also on the source pasuk for Magid - "ve-higgadeta le-BINCHA" - and you must tell your children on that day... (see Shmot 13:8). Therefore, we must catch our children's attention so that they will listen to the story.]

The Haggada's answer to this question begins with the phrase 'AVADIM HAYINU'; yet this phrase as well is based on a very important pasuk in Parshat V'etchanan. To appreciate this quote, we must first discuss its location in Sefer Devarim.

AVADIM HAYINU & SEFER DEVARIM

To appreciate why MAGGID quotes specifically this pasuk of 'avadim hayinu' to begin its discussion of our obligation to tell the story of the Exodus, we must study its source (and context) in Sefer Devarim.

Recall from our study of Sefer Devarim how Moshe Rabeinu delivers a lengthy speech (chapters 5 thru 26), in which he reviews the numerous laws that Bnei Yisrael must observe once they enter the land (see Devarim 5:1, 5:28, 6:1 etc.). As part of his introductory remarks concerning those mitzvot - Moshe states as follows:

"Should [or when] your child will ask - What [obligates us] to keep these laws and statutes and commandments that God our Lord has commanded? -
And you shall tell him - AVADIM HAYINU le-Pharaoh be-Mitzrayim... - We were once slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, but God brought us out with a mighty hand..."
(See Devarim 6:20-21, and its context.)

In other words, Sefer Devarim used the phrase 'avadim

hayinu' to introduce its explanation for why Bnei Yisrael are obligated to keep ALL of the mitzvot.

But when we continue to read that explanation in Sefer Devarim, we find the reason **WHY** God took them out:

"ve-otanu hotzi mi-sham, lema'an havi otanu el ha-aretz..."
And God took us out **in order** to bring us to the Land that He swore unto our fathers [=brit avot].

And the LORD commanded us to do all these laws, to fear the LORD our God, for our good...

And it shall be the just thing to do, if we observe to do all these commandments before the LORD our God, as He hath commanded us." [See Devarim 6:22-25.]

Here again, we find that the Torah states explicitly that God took us out of Egypt for a purpose - i.e. **in order** to inherit the Land and to serve God by keeping His laws.

This statement supports Rashi & Ibn Ezra's interpretation of the pasuk 'ba'avur zeh...' (as we discussed in Part One), that we are to explain to our children that God took us out of (and put us into) Egypt, in order that we keep His mitzvot.

Therefore, it is very meaningful that the Haggada chose specifically this pasuk of 'avadim hayinu' to introduce its discussion of WHY we are obligated to tell the story of Yetziat Mitzrayim on this special evening.

In fact, one could suggest that this may have been the underlying reasoning behind Shmuel's opinion (in Pesachim 116a). By stating that we begin the story with the pasuk of 'avadim hayinu', Shmuel is simply stating that before we tell the story, we must explain the reason for this obligation - just as we do in MAGGID!

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STORY

As we explained earlier, this paragraph that begins with AVADIM HAYINU does NOT begin the story of Yetziat Mitzrayim. Instead, it makes two very important statements, which provide the answer to the 'one question' of WHY this night is so special. Hence we explain:

- **WHY** we are obligated to tell this story – for had it not been for this story of how God saved us from Egypt, we would still be slaves till this day;

And, then we explain:

- **WHO** is obligated to tell this story - i.e. 've-afilu kulanu chachamim..' - and even if we [who gather] are all very wise and learned and know the entire Torah, it remains incumbent upon us to tell that story; and the more we elaborate upon it, the better!

MA'ASEH BE-R. ELIEZER...

To prove this second point of the 'avadim hayinu' paragraph (that even 'know it alls' are obligated to tell the story), the next paragraph in MAGGID quotes a story of five great Torah scholars (in fact Tannaim) who gathered for the Seder in Bnei Brak. Even though they certainly knew the story; nonetheless they spent the entire evening (until dawn the next morning) discussing it.

[This reflects a classic format for a Rabbinic statement. First the Rabbis state the obligation [in our case, that everyone is obligated to tell the story - even 'know it alls'] - afterward they support that ruling by quoting a story [in our case, the story of the five scholars who spent the entire evening discussing the story of the Exodus, even though they surely knew it.]

It is also interesting to note how this story concludes when their students reminded them that it was so late – that it was already time to read morning "kriyat shema". Based on our above study of Sefer Devarim, this should not surprise us – for the section of Chumash that "avadim hayinu" is quoted from (and refers to), begins with the SHEMA (see Devarim 6:4 thru 6:23)!

Even though the Haggada does not quote all the conversations between these wise men that evening, the next paragraph does quote one specific discussion. Let's explain why:

AMAR RABBI ELIEZER BEN AZARYA...

The specific discussion that we quote concerns the Biblical source for our **daily** obligation to **'mention'** the story of the Exodus (see Devarim 16:3). In Hebrew, this obligation is commonly referred to as "**zechira**" [to passively remember], in contrast to our 'once a year' obligation at the Seder of "**sippur**" - to actively **tell** the story of the Exodus.

Most likely, the Haggada chose to quote this specific discussion as it relates to the obvious connection between these two mitzvot ("**zechira**" & "**sippur**").

One could suggest that the story we tell at the Seder ("**sippur**") serves as the reference point for our daily mention ("**zechira**") of the Exodus - when we recite the third 'parshia' of keriyat shema (see Bamidbar 15:41), every morning and evening. To mention this story on a daily basis only becomes meaningful if we first 'tell the story' in full (at least once a year).

We should note as well that the very pasuk: "I am the Lord your God who took you out of the Land of Egypt **to be for you a God**" (Bamidbar 15:41) supports the opinion of Rashi & Ibn Ezra (see their commentary to Shmot 13:8) that we must explain to our children that God took us out of Egypt **in order** that we keep His commandments (like eating matza).

See also the last several psukim of Tehillim 105, noting the word "baavur" in its concluding verse. Notice as well the mention of the Ten Plagues in that chapter, noting how there mentioned as part of a review of how God kept His promise of "brit bein ha'btarim" to the Avot, by taking us out of Egypt.

THE FOUR SONS

This section reflects the statement in the Mishna: "Ifi da'ato shel ha-ben, aviv melamdo" - based on the level of the child, the parent should teach [the story]. [See Pesachim 116a.]

Based on this dictum, the Haggada quotes a Mechilta, which offers **four** examples of **how** to tell the story to different types of children - each example based on a pasuk in Chumash (where the father answers his son).

The opening statement of this section: 'baruch ha-Makom...' serves as a 'mini' "birkat ha-Torah" [a blessing recited before Torah study], as we are about to engage in the study of a Mechilta - the Midrash on Sefer Shmot. The quote itself begins with "keneged arba banim dibra Torah..."

As this explanation of this section is so lengthy, we have included a 'mini shiur' on this topic, which can be found as an Appendix and the end of this shiur:

"YACHOL ME-ROSH CHODESH"

In the next section, beginning with: 'yachol me-rosh chodesh...' we discuss yet another aspect of our 'obligation to tell the story' - this time concerning **WHEN** we are obligated. Here, the Haggada quotes an analytical discourse which arrives at the conclusion that the story must be told on evening of the Seder.

The logic behind this discourse, as usual, is based on psukim in Sefer Shmot. : Because the Torah's first command to **remember this day** is recorded in Shmot 12:14, as part of a set of commandments given to Moshe on Rosh Chodesh Nisan (see 12:1-2), one might think that the phrase "v'haya ha'yom ha'zeh **l'zikaron**" (in 12:14) refers to Rosh Chodesh [that's the "hava amina"].

Furthermore, when Moshe relays these laws to Bnei Yisrael in chapter 13, he also reminds them that they are leaving Egypt in the 'month of the spring' (see 13:4-5).

Nevertheless, he then informs that they must remember this day that they left Egypt by not eating chametz & by eating only matza for seven days (see 13:3-7).

In **that** context, Moshe then commands them that they must tell the story to their children **on that day** "ba'yom ha'hu" (see 13:8) - which implies on the day they are eating matza (and hence not on Rosh Chodesh. However, this pasuk does seem to imply the **day time [ba'Yom ha'hu]**, which may refer to the day when they first offer the Korban on the 14th in the afternoon [based on Shmot 12:6 and hence "yachol m'b'od yom..."].

The drasha then rejects that possibility, understanding based on the next phrase in 13:8 - "ba'avur zeh" - where "zeh" in its context must be referring to the matza AND the Korban Pesach (based on Rashi's understanding of "avodat ha'zot" in 13:5)- hence the story must be told at the same time that we eat matza with the korban Pesach, i.e. on the **evening** of the 15th.]

"MI-TCHILA OVDEI AVODA ZARA..."

After defining the various aspects of our obligation, MAGGID introduces the story with the paragraph that begins with "mi-tchila ovdei avoda zara..." (possibly following Rav's opinion in Pesachim 116a).

Even this section may give the impression that the story starts here, if you read this paragraph carefully, you'll notice it isn't a story at all. Instead, the Haggada is making a very important **statement**, and then proves that statement with a text-proof from Yehoshua chapter 24.

As you'd expect by now, to appreciate what's really going on, we'll need to study that quote in its context. Let's begin by taking a closer look at this statement - and its proof-text.

The Statement:

"Mi-tchila ovdei avoda zara.hayu.avoteinu, ve-achshav kirvanu ha-Makom le-**avodato**"

At first, our forefathers were servants to strange gods - but now, God has brought us closer to Him - **[in order] to serve Him!**

The Proof:

"And Yehoshua said to the people: 'Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Your fathers dwelt in the past - beyond the River, even Terach - the father of Avraham, and the father of Nachor - and they **served** other gods.

And I took your father Avraham from beyond the River, and led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his seed, and gave him Yitzchak.

And I gave unto Yitzchak Yaakov and Esav; and I gave Esav mount Seir, to possess it; and Yaakov and his children went down into Egypt" (Yehoshua 24:2-4).

This statement should not surprise us, for once again we find the Haggada emphasizing the point (discussed in Part One) that God chose the people of Israel for a purpose - i.e. to **serve** Him!

However, if you study the quoted text-proof, you'll notice that it only proves the first half of our statement, i.e. that we were once idol worshipers, but it doesn't prove the second half - that God brought us close in order to serve Him.

The solution to this problem is very simple. To show how this quote from Yehoshua proves the second point as well, we simply need to read the continuation of Yehoshua chapter 24.

RE-AFFIRMING BRIT SINAI in Sefer Yehoshua

Review 24:1- 25, noting how it divides into two sections: 24:1-13 (a history lesson), and 24:14-25 (a covenant).

Our proof text (24:2-4) is only the opening line of Yehoshua's 'history lesson' that he delivers to the nation gathered in Shchem, before challenging them with an 'option' whether or not to accept God's covenant:

"Now - fear the LORD, and **serve Him** in sincerity and in truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River, and in Egypt; and **serve ye the LORD**.

And if it seems to a bad idea to **serve the LORD**, then choose this day **whom you will serve**; whether the gods which your fathers served that were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell; but as for me and my house, **we will serve the LORD**" (Yehoshua 24:14-15).

The entire reason why Yehoshua gathered the people in Shchem and reviewed their history was in order to challenge them with this goal - i.e. their willingness to truly serve God. After

all, as Yehoshua explains, it was for this very reason that God chose Avraham Avinu. Thus the proof on the second half of the opening statement [that God chose Avraham to SERVE Him] is derived from the continuation of that chapter!

Note as well how the chapter continues, emphasizing over and over again this same theme:

"And the people answered: 'Far be it from us that we should forsake the LORD, to serve other gods; for the LORD our God, He it is that brought us and our fathers up out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and that did those great signs in our sight..."

therefore we also will **serve the LORD**; for He is our God.'

And Yehoshua said unto the people: '**You cannot serve the LORD**; for He is a holy God; He is a jealous God; He will not forgive your transgression nor your sins....'

And the people said: 'Nay; but **we will serve the LORD**.'

And Yehoshua said unto the people: 'You are witnesses that **you have chosen God to serve Him**. - And they said: 'We are witnesses.'--

And the people said unto Yehoshua: '**The LORD our God will we serve**, and unto His voice will we hearken.'

So Yehoshua made a **covenant** with the people that day, and set them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem."

[See Yehoshua 24:16-25!]

Hence, the proof for the entire statement of 'mi-tchila...' is found in the continuation of Yehoshua chapter 24. Most probably, when this section was first composed, the Haggada assumed that its readers were well versed in Tanach, and knew the continuation of that chapter.

[Note as well how psukim that we do quote from Yehoshua (see 24:2-4) form a beautiful summary of Sefer Breishit, as they focus on the key stages of the 'bechira' process.

Should you be looking for something novel to do at your Seder, you could have the participants read from this section. Note as well that Yehoshua 24:5-7 is an excellent (albeit short) review of the story of Yetziat Mitzrayim.]

This background can help us appreciate how this statement of 'mi-tchila' sets the stage for the story that we are about to tell - for it explains why God originally chose Avraham - i.e. to become the forefather of a nation that will serve Him. The next paragraph of MAGGID will explain its connection to the story that we are about to begin.

"BARUCH SHOMER HAVTACHATO"

In the next paragraph we find yet another 'statement' (and not a story) followed by a proof-text, that relates once again to God's original choice of our forefathers. We will now show how this section explains why the story must begin with Avraham.

Statement:

"Baruch shomer havtachato... - Blessed is He who keeps His promise [of redemption] to Am Yisrael, for God had calculated the end [time for redemption] as He had promised Avraham Avinu at brit bein ha-btarim. As God stated:

Proof:

'Know very well that your offspring will be **strangers in a foreign land** which will **oppress and enslave them** for four hundred years. But that nation who will oppress them I will judge, and afterward they will go out with great wealth"

[See Breishit 15:13-18].

In this statement, we thank God for keeping His promise to Avraham Avinu, at "brit bein ha-btarim", to ultimately redeem Bnei Yisrael from their affliction, after some four hundred years.

At first glance, this statement sounds like yet another expression of gratitude. However, when considering its position in Maggid, one could suggest a very different reason for its mention specifically at this point.

Recall how the previous paragraph explained that God had chosen our forefathers to establish a nation to **serve** Him. In order to become that nation, God entered into a covenant with Avraham Avinu - i.e. "brit bein ha-btarim" - which forecasted the need for Avraham's offspring to first undergo suffrage in 'a land not theirs' in order to become that nation.

In other words, this historical process of slavery, followed by a miraculous redemption, was to serve as a 'training experience' that would facilitate the formation of that nation. [See concept of "kur ha'barzel" and its context in Devarim 4:20.]

Hence, this paragraph explains why the story of the Exodus must begin with "brit bein ha-btarim" - for our slavery in Egypt was not accidental, rather it was part of God's master plan. In a certain sense, God put us into Egypt - in order to take us out!

[This does not imply that every event that happened to Am Yisrael was already predetermined since the time of Avraham Avinu. Rather, this overall framework of becoming a nation in someone else's land - followed by oppression and servitude - then followed by redemption - was forecasted. How exactly it would play out, who would be the oppressor, and how intense that oppression would be - was yet to be determined. See Rambam Hilchot Teshuva chapters 5 & 6; see also Seforno's introduction to Sefer Shmot as his commentary on the first chapter.]

As we thank God for fulfilling His promise to Avraham, we are in essence thanking God for His covenant **and its very purpose**, not just for taking us out of Egypt.

Therefore in this section of Maggid, before we tell the story of WHAT happened - we must first explain WHY it happened.

In the next paragraph, we must explain why that covenant that God had made with Avraham Avinu - remains meaningful for all generations (including ours):

"VE-HEE SHE-AMDA"

As we lift our cups and recite the "v'hee sh'amda" - we declare yet another important statement, connecting that covenant and the events of the past with today:

"ve-HEE she-amda la-avoteinu **ve-LANU** "

- And it is THIS [Promise that was part of the COVENANT, i.e. brit bein ha-btarim] which stood for our fathers, AND for us as well. For not only once [in our history] did our enemies try to destroy us; but in EVERY generation we are endangered, but God comes to save us [for the sake of His covenant]."

The word "hee" in this statement obviously refers to the promise ['havtacha'] of brit bein ha-btarim (mentioned in the previous paragraph). This statement is so important that our custom is to raise the cup of wine before reciting this proclamation!

Here we explain that "brit bein ha-btarim" was not merely a 'one-time coupon' promising one major redemption, but rather it defined an eternal relationship between God and His people. The events of Yetziat Mitzrayim are only the initial stage of this everlasting relationship. Therefore, anytime in our history, whenever we are in distress - God will ultimately come to redeem us. However, the reason why God redeems us is in order that we can return to serve Him (that's why He chose us).

This provides us with a deeper understanding of why every generation must tell-over the story of Yetziat Mitzrayim. At the Seder, we are not simply thanking God for the 'event' but rather for the entire 'process'. Yetziat Mitzrayim was not simply a 'one-time' act of redemption. Rather, it was a critical stage in an ongoing historical process in which God desires that Am Yisrael become His special nation.

As this purpose is eternal, so too is the covenant. Therefore, we must remind ourselves that not only is God committed to His covenant, but we too must keep our side, and should we need redemption once again, it will come - but we must learn from our past mistakes on how need to ready ourselves - to be deserving (see Tehillim 78:1-8!). After all, redemption requires spiritual

readiness. [In our shiur on Parshat Bo, we explained how the commandment to 'get rid of our chametz' may reflect this need to get rid of our bad behavior – to prepare for redemption.]

This may also explain why we invite Eliyahu ha-navi, when we begin the final section of the Haggada, where we express our hope for our future redemption. According to the final psukim of Sefer Mal'achi (the Haftara for Shabbat ha-Gadol!), Eliyahu will come to help the nation perform proper 'teshuva' – "v'heyshev lev avot al banim, v'lev banim al avotam.." - to become worthy for redemption.

"TZEY U-LMAD" / "ARAMI OVED AVI"

As we explained in Part Two, this is the section where we actually tell the story – see that shiur for the detailed explanation.

Just a few points re: some of the drashot.

Most of them are direct quotes from the story of the Exodus in Sefer Shmot – which makes perfect sense, as "mikra bikurim" in Sefer Devarim is a very abridged version of that story in Sefer Shmot. Therefore, we will focus our discussion on some of the interesting quotes that are not from Sefer Shmot:

"va'yered Mitzraim" – "anus a pi ha'dibur"

When Yaakov and family went down to Egypt – and STAYED there, it was not because they wanted to, but because God told them they had to! [Not only to go down, but also to stay there!]

This is based on Breishit 46:1-5 (read those psukim carefully, see also Rashbam). Note as well how God's instructions to Yaakov (to go down and stay in Egypt) emerge as the beginning of the process of "brit bein ha'tarim" (see Rabman on those psukim!). Hence, the phrase "ha'dibur" in this drasha – either relates to Breishit 46:2-3, or to Breishit 15:1 [note "v'yi DVAR Hashem el Avram laymor..."] in light of 15:13-18.

"bmtai ma'at" – kmo shneemar – b'shivim nefesh yardu..."

"Small in number, as the pasuk says, with 70 souls you went down to Egypt, and now you are as numerous as the stars of the Heaven"

Even though this appears to be just an innocent quote, if you look at the context in Devarim, you'll notice how fitting it is for the Seder, especially in light of our discussion in Part One re: the purpose of telling the story.

Read carefully from Devarim 10:12 thru 11:4 – noting the connection between these psukim and the purpose of the story of the Exodus, paying special attention to 10:17-19.

After reading that, you won't be surprised that Chazal chose to quote from 10:22 for this specific drasha (in light of 10:18-19).

Notice as well the thematic connection to "brit bein ha'tarim" – as it is in that context that we find for the very first time the promise of offspring 'like the stars in the sky' (see Breishit 15:5-7).

"v'ray" – kmo shneemar – rvava k'ezemach..."

This lengthy quote from Yechezkel 16:6-8 (not worth translating for young children) is part of one of the harshest rebukes that Am Yisrael ever received. If you'd like to feel a bit of depression (to balance out the wine) – review this entire chapter in Yechezkel (16:1-63), noting that the psukim we quote are about the only kind ones in the entire chapter. In a nutshell, that chapter describes how Bnei Yisrael had been unfaithful in their covenant with God from the time of Yetziat Mitzraim, until the time of Yechezkel. The main message for the Seder is from Yechezkel 16:60-63 – be sure to read at least that.

This quote (16:6-8) in our drasha at the Seder, hints not only to that rebuke, but also to the possibility (and path) of future redemption, as explained by Yechezkel in 16:60-63.

"va'yareu OTANU ha'Mitzrim" – shneemar: hava nitchakma..."

Some Haggadot translate this pasuk as: The Egyptians were bad (or did evil) to us. However, if so, the Hebrew should be "va'yarey'u LANU" and not "OTANU". [To prove this, see Bamidbar 20:15-16 in its context]

Instead, the proper translation should be – The Egyptians

MADE US THE BAD ONES – in other words, Egypt claimed that the Jews were planning a takeover, thus providing the Egyptians an excuse to enslave them – for the sake of 'national security'.

As that explanation is also "pshuto shel mikra" in Shmot 1:8-11 (read carefully), the quote in this drasha from precisely those psukim in Shmot (1:10) is right on the mark!

"b'yad chazaka– zo ha'dever.../b'zroah netuya– zo ha'cherev"

Even though one can find many psukim that contain "yad chazaka" and "zroah netuya" that refer to many different Plagues or punishments – the Haggada prefers to relate these two phrases to "dever" & "cherev". Most likely the reason for this is Moshe Rabeinu's opening threat to Pharaoh, that if he doesn't allow Bnei Yisrael permission to go worship their God in the desert – he will smite Egypt with "dever" & "cherev" (see Shmot 5:1-3, in light of Shmot 3:18-19!) As this introduced the story of the Makkot, it becomes a very logical drasha.

"mora gadol – zeh gilui shchina..."

To appreciate this one, you must read Devarim 4:32-39 in its entirety, noting how our drasha quotes only 4:34 – however, the "gilui shchina" concept is based on 4:33 & 4:36 that describe "maamad Har Sinai" – which was the purpose of the miracles of Yetziat Mitzraim – as alluded to in the other psukim.

We could go on and on, but I hope you got the point. If you want to appreciate Midrashim (and not just mumble them), you must first study the psukim that they quote and pay attention to their context.

With that in mind, let's continue now with our study of the rest of Magid

WHY MIKRA BIKKURIM?

It may not be by chance that Chazal chose to incorporate a Midrash of "mikra bikurim" - even though it is rather cryptic - as the method through which we fulfill our obligation of sippur Yetziat Mitzraim. Let's explain why.

Recall from our shiur on Parshat Ki Tavo, that "mikra bikurim" (see Devarim 26:1-10) serves as a yearly proclamation whereby every individual thanks God for His fulfillment of the final stage of brit bein ha'tarim.

[This is supported by numerous textual and thematic parallels between the psukim of mikra bikurim (Devarim 26:1-9), and brit bein ha'tarim (see Breishit 15:7-18). Note as well the use of the word 'yerusha' in 26:1 and in 15:1-8!]

This proclamation constitutes much more than simply thanking God for our 'first fruits'. Rather, it thanks God for the Land (see Devarim 26:3) that He had promised our forefathers (in brit bein ha'tarim / see Breishit 15:18). The 'first fruits' are presented as a 'token of our appreciation' for the fact that God has fulfilled His side of the covenant - as each individual must now declare that he will be faithful to his side of the covenant.

As mikra bikurim constitutes a biblical 'nusach' ['formula'] through which one thanks God for His fulfillment of brit bein ha'tarim, one could suggest that it was for this reason that the Mishna chose these same psukim as its framework for telling the story of Yetziat Mitzraim.

It very well may be that this custom to tell the story at the Seder with "mikra bikurim" began after the destruction of the Temple (note that the Tosefta of Mesechet Pesachim does not include this custom, while the Mishna (compiled later) does include it! Without the Temple, the individual could no longer recite "mikra bikurim". However, we can at least remind ourselves of this yearly need to proclaim our allegiance to God's covenant - by quoting from "mikra bikurim" at the Seder!

This may explain why the Haggada only quotes the first four psukim of mikra bikurim (where it talks about Yetziat Mitzraim) but not the pasuk that describes how He bought us into the Promised Land.

Finally, note also the word 'higgadeti' in Devarim 26:3 and compare it with the word 've-higgadeta' in Shmot 13:8!

THE TEN PLAGUES

In the drasha of Arami Oved Avi, notice how we quote Devarim 26:8 twice, each time trying to understand why the pasuk describes how God took us out of Egypt in FIVE different ways: b'yad chazaka, b'zroah ntuya, etc.

The first drasha assumes that each of these five words refers to something specific, and proves it by finding that same word in the story of the Exodus. The second drasha, makes a very different assumption, that each of these five words refers to two plagues (as some are two words, while others are in plural – e.g. "otot u'moftim") – hence the conclusion that this entire pasuk is alluding to the Ten Plagues [5x2=10].

At this point, the Haggada quotes an additional drasha - by R. Yossi ha-Glili - that there must have been 5 times as many plagues at the Red Sea than were in Egypt – based on a textual comparison between Shmot 8:15 ['etzba' – finger] and 14:31 ('yad'= hand). Based on the ratio between - 'etzba' of the Makkot to 'yad' at Kriyat Yam Suf (i.e. hand/finger = 5/1) – we conclude that there were 50 plagues at Yam Suf.

FROM 50 to 250 based on Tehillim 78

Then R. Eliezer and R. Akiva add multiples of 4x and 5x for each plague - based on Tehillim 78:49. But don't their drasha for granted, and that entire perek in Tehillim relates to the deeper meaning of the Seder.

Take a quick look at Tehillim 78, noting the topic of its 'header' in 78:1-8, where every generation is instructed to teach the next generation about the great miracles that God performed; but also not to be like their forefathers, who DID NOT appreciate God's wonders, and hence did not properly 'prepare their hearts' for their redemption.

The chapter continues by listing all the great things that God did for His people (in Chumash), and how Bnei Yisrael consistently rebelled – leading to the punishment of that generation. By studying our Biblical history, we are supposed to learn a lesson; that we should 'prepare ourselves' – to be ready for redemption whenever it comes; as that very preparation can help bring redemption!

[Note also "v'hu rachum" in 78:38 in the context of this chapter, and you'll understand why we recite so often in our daily prayers!]

The second section of this chapter (from 78:41 thru 78:53), discusses how Bnei Yisrael should have learned to fear God (but did not) from what they witnessed during the Plagues. In that context, 78:44-51 describes most of the Plagues (except 3,6,& 9 – the ones w/o warnings!) – yet 78:49 itself does not include the names of any of the Plagues that we are familiar with.

It appears that this oddity is what leads to this drasha, as we assume that 78:49 is describing one of the Plagues – but with 4 (or 5) different descriptions. If so, then the same could apply to all the plagues. Hence we can multiply each plague by 4 or 5.

Finally, it may be that our Haggada includes this focus on the miracles that took place when crossing the Red Sea, as it was specifically after witnessing that miracle when Bnei Yisrael responded with a beautiful song of Praise ("az yashir"). As we are about to praise Hashem in the Hallel, it is fitting that we discuss the miracles of Kriyat Yam Suf at our Seder – as a conclusion to the story that we told.

[Note in the Rambam's nusach of MAGGID, he skips this entire section. This suggests that this Midrash is an additional 'elaboration', but not a necessary part of the story that we must tell. In other words, if you need to skip something, this section is a 'good candidate'.]

DAYENU

Now that the story is finished, it's time for 'praise' - following the format of the Mishna "matchilin bi-gnut u-mesaymim be-

shevach' - and we will now explain how DAYENU serves as a special form of HALLEL (praise).

"Dayenu" is a very simple, yet beautiful poem - containing fifteen stanzas describing acts of God's kindness - each stanza stating that it would have been 'enough' had God only helped us in one way.

For example, we begin by saying it would have been enough had He only taken us out of Egypt, and not punished the Egyptians. The poem continues stage by stage through the process of redemption from Egypt (until we arrive in the Land of Israel and build the Temple), saying how each stage would have been 'enough', even had God not helped us with the next stage.

However, some of those statements appear very strange, for they include that it 'would have been enough had we not received the Torah', which simply doesn't make sense!

[And how could a 'zionist' say, let alone sing, that -'it would have been enough'- even if God had not given us the Land of Israel?]

To understand what we are 'really saying' in "dayenu", we must consider its context, as well as its content.

We recite "dayenu" - precisely when we finish telling the story of the Exodus (with the discussion of the Plagues) - and right at the spot where we are supposed to begin our "shevach" [praise].

Within this context, the refrain of "dayenu" has an implicit suffix. In other words, - "dayenu" should **not** be translated simply as 'it would have been enough'; rather, "dayenu" means:

'it would have been enough - to PRAISE God, i.e. to say Hallel –

In other words, we say as follows:

- Had God **only** taken us out of Egypt and not punished the Egyptians, **it would have been reason enough** to say Hallel
- Had He split the sea, but not given us the 'manna', that alone **would have been reason enough** to say Hallel...

... And so on.

With this background, the next paragraph of that poem makes perfect sense:

"al achat kama vekhama..."

- How much more so is it proper **to thank God** for He has performed **ALL** these acts of kindness ..

He took us out of Egypt, **and** punished them, **and** split the sea, **and** gave us the manna etc.

In essence, this beautiful poem poetically summarizes each significant stage of redemption, from the time of the Exodus until Am Yisrael's conquest of the Land - stating how each single act of God's kindness in that process would be reason enough to say Hallel, now even more so we must say Hallel, for God did all of these things for us.

From this perspective, "dayenu" serves a double purpose. First and foremost, it concludes the story with "shevach" [praise]. and qualifies the Hallel that we are about to sing. However, it could also be understood as a continuation of the story of the Exodus. Let's explain why and how:

Recall that the last "drasha" [elaboration] on the psukim of "arami oved avi" led into a lengthy discussion of the Ten Plagues. To fulfill our obligation at the Seder 'to tell the story', we could (and do) finish right here. But the poem of "dayenu" actually continues that story, picking up from the Ten Plagues ["asa bahem shfatim" refers to the Plagues], and continuing through all the significant events in the desert until our arrival in the Land of Israel and building the Temple.

This takes on additional significance, as it concludes in the same manner as the final pasuk of "arami oved avi" - which for some reason we do not include in our Seder (even though according to the Mishna it appears that we really should)! Recall that according to Devarim 26:9, the proclamation should conclude with: "va'yvi'einu el ha'Makom ha'zeh"

According to Chazal - he brought us to the Bet ha'Mikdash!
"va'yiten lanu et ha'aretz ha'zot" he gave us the land of Israel

Even though we don't elaborate upon this pasuk in our version of Maggid, "dayenu" enables us to include it!

In this manner, the song of "dayenu" serves as both "shevach" [praise] and "sippur" [story] - at the same time!

It is also interesting to note that we find 15 levels of praise in the Dayenu, that most probably correspond to the 15 steps leading to the Bet ha-Mikdash, better known as the 'shir ha-ma'a lot', i.e. the 15 psalms in Tehillim (120-134) / composed for each step.

The 'HASHKAFa' of DAYENU

According to our explanation thus far, "dayenu" sets the stage for Hallel, as we will now praise God [by singing Hallel] not only in gratitude for taking us out of Egypt, but also in appreciation for each significant stage of the redemptive process. We thank God not only for the Exodus, but also for the 'manna', for shabbat, for coming close to Har Sinai, for the Torah, for the Land of Israel..., and finally for the building of the Bet HaMikdash.

From a certain perspective, this poem may allude to a very profound 'hashkafa' [outlook on life], and a message that is very applicable to our own generation.

Today, there are those who focus at the Seder only on the first stanza of "dayenu," viewing 'freedom from slavery' as the final goal, and hence the ultimate goal of redemption. For them, this first stanza of "dayenu" is 'enough' - and to them, that is the entire meaning of Passover - a holiday of Freedom.

Others focus only upon the last stanza, that without the entire land of Israel in our possession, and without the re-building of the bet-ha'Mikdash, the entire redemptive process is meaningless. In their eyes, Hallel should only be sung when the entire redemption process is complete, and Am Yisrael reaches its final goal.

The beautiful poem of "dayenu" seems to disagree with both approaches. Instead, each significant stage in the process of redemption deserves our recognition and for requires that we praise God for it, even though it is 'not enough'!

It is this hashkafic message, i.e., the understanding and appreciation of each step of the redemptive process, which "dayenu" can teach us. "Ge'ulat Yisra'el" - the redemption of Israel - even in our time, is a process which is comprised of many stages. Every significant step in this process, be it simply sovereignty, or partial borders, or victory in battle; or freedom to study Torah, even without complete redemption, requires our gratitude and praise to Hashem.

For each stage in that process, it is incumbent upon Am Yisrael to recognize that stage and thank Hashem accordingly, while at the same time recognizing that many more stages remain yet unfulfilled - and reminding ourselves of how we need act -to be deserving of that next stage.

"Dayenu" challenges us to find the proper balance.

"RABBAN GAMLIEL"

Even though we have completed our story, before continuing with the Hallel, the Haggada wants to make sure that we also fulfill Rabban Gamliel's opinion (in Masechet Pesachim chapter 10) that we have not fulfilled our obligation of "v'higadta l'bincha" unless we have explained the connection between that story and the commandment to eat PESACH, MATZA & MAROR.

[It appears that Ramban Gamliel understands the word "zeh" (in Shmot 13:8) refers to the 'korban Pesach' - probably based on his understanding that the phrase "ha'avoda ha'zot" in 13:5 also relates to 'korban Pesach'. Hence, Raban Gamliel requires that we explain to our children (and whoever is gathered) why we are eating not only matza, but also pesach and maror.]

Rabban Gamliel's statement could also imply that our obligation of eating matza and maror is not complete unless we explain how they connect to the story that we just told. This would explain why it is added at the conclusion of the "sippur Yetziat Mitzrayim" section, as we are about to fulfill our obligation to eat matza, and maror.

[In our times, this section may also be considered a 'fill in' for

the KORBAN PESACH itself. During the time of the Bet ha-Mikdash, MAGGID was said while eating the korban pesach. Nowadays, since the korban cannot be offered, we mention pesach, matza, and maror instead of eating the korban. Thus, this section forms an excellent introduction to the Hallel, which in ancient times was recited as the Korban Pesach was offered, and later when it was eaten.]

This section forms the conclusion of "sippur Yetziat Mitzrayim", and sets the stage for our reciting of Hallel - to praise God for our salvation.

[See Rambam Hilchot chametz u'matza 7:5, where his concluding remark implies that "haggada" ends here.]

"BE-CHOL DOR VA-DOR"

Considering the integral connection between the events of the Exodus and "brit avot" (discussed above) the statement of: "be-chol dor va-dor chayav adam lir'ot et atzmo ke-ilu hu yatza mi-Mitzrayim..." takes on additional significance.

Before we say HALLEL, we conclude our story by stating that in every generation - each individual must feel as though HE himself was redeemed from Egypt. As the purpose of this entire historical process of redemption was to prepare Am Yisrael for their national destiny - it becomes imperative that every member of Am Yisrael feels as though they experienced that same 'training mission'.

One could suggest that this closing statement complements the opening statement of MAGGID (in the avadim hayinu paragraph) that had God had not taken us out of Egypt we would still enslaved until this very day. Now that we have told the story of Yetziat Mitzrayim, we are supposed to feel as though we ourselves were redeemed.

As stated in Devarim 6:20-25, the events of Yetziat Mitzrayim obligate Am Yisrael to keep not only the mitzvot of Pesach but ALL of the mitzvot of the Torah! [See Sefer Kuzari section 1.]

[Note how the phrase "ve-otanu hotzi mi-sham" that we recite in this section of MAGGID is quoted from Devarim 6:23! Note as well how Chazal most probably arrived at this conclusion based on Moshe Rabeinu's statement in Devarim 5:2-3 (at the very beginning of his main speech) that God's covenant at Har Sinai was made with the new generation, even though they themselves were not born yet!]

BCHOL DOR V'DOR & SEFER DEVARIM

Note as well how the pasuk of "v'otanu hotzi m'sham **Imaan**. [for the purpose of]..." (see 6:22-23) is quoted at the end of MAGID in the "bchol dor v'dor" section - and not by chance!

Recall as well how the final mitzvot of the main speech of Sefer Devarim are found in chapter 26, namely "mikra bikkurim" and "viddui maasrot". In light of our study of Sefer Devarim and the sources in Sefer Shmot for Maggid (relating to how the experience in Egypt served to sensitize the nation - to act properly once they become sovereign in their own land), one can suggest an additional reason for why Chazal chose Mikra Bikurim - from Devarim chapter 26 - as the official 'formula' by which we tell the story.

Note how the Torah concludes our declaration in 26:5-9 by reminding us (in 26:10-11) how we must be sure that the stranger and Levite share in our happiness (for they have no Land of their own, and hence they are not able to bring their own first fruits).

It should also not surprise us that the next law, "vidduy maasrot" at the end of every three years, emphasizes this very same theme. Simply read its opening statement in 26:12-13, focusing on the need of the farmer to give the necessary tithes to the poor and needy, the orphans, widows, and strangers. Only afterwards does he have the ethical 'right' to pray to God that He should continue to bless the land and its produce - see 26:15!

This law forms a beautiful conclusion for many of the earlier laws in the main speech of Sefer Devarim, again a set of laws originally given to Bnei Yisrael at Har Sinai (see Devarim 5:28), and ties nicely into the theme of thanking God for our redemption while remembering its purpose .

LEFICHACH / HALLEL

As an introduction to the first two chapters of HALLEL, we recite 'lefichach...'. Note how this section contrasts 'suffering' with 'redemption' (note the numerous examples). This too may reflect our theme that we thank God for the process, and not just for the event.

The two chapters of Hallel that we recite at this time are also quite meaningful. The reason for 'be-tzeit Yisrael mi-Mitzrayim' is rather obvious. But note the opening words of the first chapter: "hallelu **AVDEI** Hashem, hallelu et **SHEM** Hashem..."

In other words, as we are now God's servants ['avdei Hashem'] - and no longer slaves to Pharaoh, it is incumbent upon us to praise our new master.

THE 'SECOND CUP'

We conclude Maggid with the blessing of "ge'ula" [redemption] on the 2nd cup of wine.

As we recite this blessing, note how most fittingly we express our hope that we will become worthy of God's redemption speedily in our own time

A FINAL THOUGHT

As you may have noticed, even though much of our above discussion may seem 'technical', it has all alluded to a much deeper theme, that the Seder is not only about 'gratitude' - i.e. thanking God for what happened; but more so - about 'destiny' - i.e. our need to recognize why it happened. That goal could never be accomplished without our tradition of the importance of Jewish education, the obligation of each generation to teach the next, not only about what did happen, but to learn from that history (even from its mistakes – see again Tehillim 78:1-8!). This tradition can enable our children to shape their future in the proper manner.

Therefore, we conclude our study with a mini-shiur on the topic of the Four Sons, as it reflects this message.

APPENDIX

THE FOUR SONS [K'NEGGED ARBA BANIM..]

Are the 'Four Sons' really in the Bible?

When we quote that Midrash at the Seder, we certainly get that impression, for the Haggada quotes a pasuk from Chumash as the source for each son. However, when you take a closer look at that Midrash, you'll immediately notice that when it does quote Chumash, it doesn't seem to be very 'accurate'.

So, is the Midrash wrong?

Of course not! However, to appreciate its message - the reader must realize that this Midrash is not explaining Chumash, rather it is using psukim from Chumash to develop a beautiful message. [Quite often, that's what Midrash is all about!]

Therefore, to uncover the deeper meaning of the Midrash of the Four Sons, we will first study "pshat" to find the 'real' reason for why there are 'four sons' in the Chumash; that will enable us to appreciate what Chazal intended to teach us by way of their beautiful "drash".

[It should be noted that the Midrash of the four sons that we quote in the Haggada is actually a Mechilta, and also found in the Talmud Yerushalmi - See Haggadah Shlayma by Rav Kasher for complete set of sources and versions.]

INTRODUCTION

Let's begin by quoting the opening line of this Midrash, and translating it into English:

"Kenegeg arba'ah banim dibberah Torah"

[Corresponding to Four Sons - the Torah spoke]

- 1) echad chacham - the wise son;
- 2) ve'echad rasha - the wicked son;
- 3) echad tam - the simple son;
- 4) ve'echad she'eino yodea lish'ol
- the son who doesn't know how to ask:

The Midrash continues by quoting a question for each son - from the four instances in the Torah when a father answers his son [i.e. when a parent answers his child].

As it is commonly presumed that these four quotes all pertain to questions about Passover - the assumption is that it would have been enough had the Torah only recorded only one 'question and answer'. But when we notice that the Torah provides us with four different versions of 'questions and answers' - we assume that each version 'corresponds' to a different type of son. Based on this understanding, the Torah is simply providing us with 'prepared answers' for four different personalities of children.

This also seems to be what the Midrash implies by its opening statement "k'negged arba banim dibra Torah" - that the four times that the Torah discusses a parent answering a child - 'corresponds' to these four types of children.

However, to our surprise, when we compare the answers given by the Haggada to these four questions - to the answers provided in Chumash, we find many discrepancies!

Therefore, this original assumption must be incorrect! [Unless we conclude that the Haggada isn't quoting Chumash properly - which obviously cannot be.]

In the following shiur, we will first study the various psukim that this Midrash quotes, while paying careful attention to their original context. By doing so, we hope to arrive at a deeper understanding of its message.

COMPARING ANSWERS

As we explained, the four questions are direct quotes from Chumash, however - the answers that the Haggada provides are very different than those given by Chumash.

To illustrate this, let's compare these answers - one question at a time, noting the obvious differences:

** The WISE son's question:

"Mah ha'edot vehachukkim vehamishpatim asher tzivah Hashem Elokeinu etchem" ? [What are the laws... that God has commanded us?] (see Devarim 6:20)

Answer in Chumash:

"avadim ha'yinu l'pharoh b'mitzraim ..." [Tell your son: We were once slaves to Pharaoh and God took us out etc...]
(see Devarim 6:21-25 for the full answer)

Answer in Haggada:

" Ve'af attah emor lo khilchot hapesach, ein maftirim achar hapesach afikoman." [Teach him the laws of the pesach... - most likely this refers to the tenth chapter of Mesechet Pesachim - teach him until the last mishna re: afikomen]

** The WICKED son's question:

"Mah ha'avodah hazot lachem?"
[What's this service to you?]

Answer in Chumash:

"v'amar'tem zevach pesach hu l'Hashem asher pa'sach al batei bnei Yisrael b'Mitzraim..." [Tell your son that this is the Pascal offering - for God had passed over our houses when He smote the Egyptians...] (see Shmot 12:27)

Answer in Haggada:

"v'af atta hakkeh et shinnav ve'emor lo:'ba'avur zeh asah Hashem li betzeiti m'Mitzraim' ... [Even you should break his teeth - and tell him if people like him were living at that time - he would not have been worthy of redemption...]

**** The SIMPLE son's question:**

"Mah zot?" - What is this [about]?

Answer in Chumash:

"Bechozek yad hotzi'anu Hashem m'Mitzrayim m'beit avadim. V'yhi ki hiyksha Pharaoh l'shalcheinu -va'yaharog kol bchor b'erezt Mitzraim, m'bchor adam ad bchor b'haymah" - [God took us out of Egypt from the house of slavery, and when He took us out, God killed their first born... and therefore I am dedicating the first born of every womb to God..."]

(see Shmot 13:14-16)

Answer in Haggada:

"Bechozek yad hotzi'anu Hashem m'Mitzraim mibeit avadim."
- God took us out of Egypt with an outstretched Hand - [but nothing more! In other words, we only quote the first phrase of the answer.]

**** The son WHO DOESN'T KNOW TO ASK question: XXX**

As there is no question in Chumash, the Midrash only quotes the Torah's answer of "vehiggadta livincha bayom hahu lemor, 'ba'avur zeh asa Hashem li betzeiti mimitzrayim.'" (see Shmot 13:8). Therefore, the Midrash cannot provide a different answer, since the question (or lack of one) is implicit from the answer.

Instead, the Midrash notes this instance in Chumash where we are commanded to explain something to our children, **even though** it was not preceded by a question. The Midrash identifies this son as the one who doesn't know how to ask.

[As there is only an answer, we can not expect to find a discrepancy between Chumash and the Haggada for this son.]

This simple comparison between the first three of the four sons, immediately confirms that the answers in Chumash are very different than those in the Haggada.

So why can't the Midrash quote Chumash correctly?

DIFFERENT TOPICS or DIFFERENT SONS

The reason why is rather simple. If we examine these four questions in Chumash, and study their context, we will indeed find four questions, but each question relates to a different TOPIC - not to a different son!

To prove this, let's return to each question, noting its context in Chumash: [Be sure to have a Chumash handy, to follow along.]

The WISE son's 'topic': the ENTIRE TORAH

Take a quick glance at Devarim chapter six, noting how it introduces a complete set of laws that Moshe Rabeinu is about to teach. See 6:1, note also 5:1, 5:28, and especially 4:45 - as they are all psukim that introduce this same set of laws. Note as well that the psukim that we say every day in Shema (4:4-8) are part of this same introduction.

As this set of laws that Moshe is teaching will continue for some twenty chapters (from chapter 6 thru 26), the opening section deals with the underlying reason for these laws. In this context, Moshe Rabeinu 'anticipates' in 6:20:

"Should your child ask you: 'what [is the reason for] these 'eidot chukim u'mishpatim' that God is commanding us?" (see 6:20/ compare with 4:45!)

Then, the Torah tells us to answer our child as follows:

"We were once slaves in Egypt, but God took us out with a strong arm... and God took us out - in order to bring us to the land that He promised to our forefathers. And He commanded us to keep these laws to fear Him, and for our own good..." (see Devarim 6:21-25)

Obviously, this 'question & answer' has nothing to do with the personality of any type of son. [If any, it sounds more like a 'wise guy' asking, more so than a 'wise son!']

In fact, this question sounds like a very logical one that almost any child will (and should) ask, when confronted with the obligation to keep a complete set of laws that govern every walk of life. Furthermore, this question is not about the Seder, nor about Passover! It's a question about the very reason for why we are charged to keep the entire Torah!

[Note how in the Haggada we use the first line of this answer ("avadim hayinu...") to answer the "mah nishtana". Based on the context of these psukim, it is a very meaningful starting point to begin our explanation for the Exodus in Maggid.]

The WICKED son's 'topic': KORBAN PESACH

Return now to Sefer Shmot chapter 12, and take a quick glance noting how it begins with "Parshat ha'Chodesh" (12:1-20), - that describes the laws of the 'korban Pesach' in Egypt; and continues with Moshe Rabeinu's instructions to the people (see 12:21-28), including the commandment to offer a similar 'korban Pesach' on a yearly basis, once they arrive in the Land of Israel (see 12:23-26). In that context, we find yet another very logical question, that any son could (and should) ask:

"When you come to the land... keep this service [of korban Pesach] - and it shall come to pass when your children will ask you: 'What is [the purpose] of this service to you' - then you shall explain: 'This is a Passover offering for God, [to remember how] He passed over the houses of Israel, when He smote the Egyptians...' (see 12:24-27)

Once again, a very logical question, followed by a very logical answer, concerning the **topic** of KORBAN PESACH.

Without 'reading in' to the words of this question, there is no reason to assume that Chumash is talking about a 'wicked son'. In fact, it seems that Chumash expects (and wants) our children to ask this question!

The SIMPLE son's 'topic': KEDUSHAT BECHOR

Let's continue our study by jumping to Shmot chapter 13, noting the parshia that begins in 13:11 (thru 13:16), that records the laws relating to "kedushat bechor" [the holiness of the first born] - that the first born of both humans and animals should be dedicated to the service of God (see 13:11-13).

At the conclusion of those laws, the Torah anticipates once again a question from an inquisitive child, this time asking "mah zot" -[what is this all about (see 13:14)]. As this question concerns specifically the topic of the 'first-born' - the Torah proposes an answer that relates exactly to that question:

"And tell him [your son] - God took us out of Egypt from the house of slavery, and when He took us out, God killed their first born... **therefore** I am dedicating the male first born of every womb to God..." (see 13:15-16)

Once again, the topic is not about the Seder or Passover; rather the topic is "kedushat bechor". Indeed, this time the question is much shorter than in the first two instances; nonetheless - the reason for this additional question is because of the additional topic - and not necessary because he is a 'simple son'.

The DOESN'T KNOW TO ASK son's 'topic': EATING MATZA

Let's return now to the beginning of Shmot chapter 13, and quickly review from 13:3-8, noting how these psukim discuss the commandment to remember the Exodus by eating matza for seven days (and by not eating chametz).

[Note as well how 13:1-2 actually belongs with 13:11-15 - a topic that was discussed in our shiur on Parshat Bo; but beyond the scope of this shiur.]

After detailing the laws concerning eating matza for seven days, while not owning or seeing any chametz (see 13:6-7), the

Torah concludes with a commandment that we must explain why to our children **even if they don't ask**:

"And you shall tell you son on that day, for the sake of this [matza] God did for me [these miracles] when I went out of Egypt" (see 13:8)

The commandment to remember the Exodus is so important that Chumash demands that we explain why to our children, even if they don't ask. In "pshat", this doesn't imply that we are dealing with a child that doesn't know how to ask; it is simply because this mitzva is of cardinal importance!

[This is supported by Rashi & Ibn Ezra's interpretation - that this pasuk implies that we explain to our children that God took us out of Egypt **in order** that would be able to keep all of His mitzvot!.]

To summarize our study, the following table summarizes how the four instances in Chumash where the father answers his son relates to a unique topic, even each topic does relate in one form or another to the Exodus.

QUESTION =====	CONTEXT =====	TOPIC =====
Shmot 12:26	12:21-28	Korban PESACH.
Shmot 13:8	13:3-10	Chag HaMATZOT.
Shmot 13:14	3:11-16	Ke'dushat BCHOR.
Devarim 6:20,	6:1-25	ALL the MITZVOT

None of these questions are 'superfluous', as each question deals with a specific topic. Therefore, according to 'pshat' there is no necessity to relate these four questions to four different types of children, rather - there are **four questions** in Chumash because there are **four topics** in Chumash!

Could it be that the Midrash is unaware that each question relates to a different topic?

We posit exactly the opposite - that the Midrash is fully aware of the "pshat" and expects that the reader is intelligent enough to figure it out on his own. However, as is often the case, the Midrash is not coming to teach us the "pshat" of Chumash, rather it is 'using' psukim in Chumash to convey a thought; or in our case - an educational message.

In our specific case, the Midrash of the 'Four Sons' is interested in giving over an insight relating to education, a thought that carries special significance at the Seder, following the guideline of the Mishna that:

"k'daat ha'ben, aviv m'lamdo" - According to the level of the son - the father should teach (or tell over) the story.
(see Mesechet Pesachim - 10th chapter)

The Midrash wishes to expound upon this educational principle. In a very clever style, the Midrash first 'borrows' the four questions mentioned in Chumash when a father answers his son, quoting them totally out of their original context, and turning them into questions about the Seder.

As the original wording of each of these four questions in Chumash is quite different, the Midrash utilizes this to attach an identity to each question, conforming to four different types of children.

Then, to convey its educational message, the Midrash composes a special answer for each son, which relates specifically to his personality (and not to its original topic in Chumash).

For example, in the wise son's question, the phrase "mah ha'eidot" is interpreted as **what** are the laws' [of the Seder], while in Chumash it means **what is the purpose** of these laws' [of the entire Torah]. Therefore, the answer to this question in the Haggada is totally different than the answer in Chumash.

Similarly, to turn the wicked son's question into a real 'wicked

son' - the Haggada must first add some inflection into his voice, making the word "lachem" ['for you'] more emphatic - to emphasize his attitude problem. Therefore, the answer once again is not the same as the one in Chumash, instead the Midrash 'borrows' its wording from elsewhere in Chumash: "ba'avur zeh asa Hashem LI" (see Shmot 13:8) - once again adding inflection, this time emphasizing the word "li" - for ME and not for YOU.

For the simple son's question "mah zot" [What is this?] - the Midrash finds no need to make an alteration. However, since this question in the Midrash is about the Seder, it truncates the answer provided by Chumash (about kedushat bechor), quoting only the first phrase - in order to keep it short, and relevant only to the Seder (see 13:14-15!).

In essence, the Midrash provides us with four examples of how to 'read between the lines' of a question in order to discern the character of the son who is asking.

FOR PARENTS & TEACHERS

In real life, when the parent hears the question of a child; or when the teacher hears the question of a student; he must listen carefully not to the QUESTION, but also to the PERSON behind the question. To answer a question properly, the parent must not only understand the question, but must also be aware of the motivation behind it. Hence, his answer must not only be accurate, but also appropriate, as it must relate to the child's character while taking into account his spiritual needs.

The parent (and teacher) must listen carefully to the voice behind the question, evaluate and answer appropriately. When necessary he can even innovate, just as the Midrash does!

This message conveyed by the Midrash of 'the Four Sons' in the Haggada is not only the responsibility of every parent, but also the challenge of every teacher. Understanding it correctly enables us to pass down our tradition from father to son, our heritage from generation to generation; certainly a Midrash worth quoting at our Seder Table.

chag samayach,
menachem