בכל דור ודור

IN EACH AND EVERY GENERATION...

How the Haggadah Shaped Jewish Philosophy¹

I. THE HAGGADAH LIES

1. Deut. 26:8

And the Lord took us out of Egypt with a strong hand and with an outstretched forearm and with great awe and with signs and with wonders.

וַיּוֹצִאֵנוּ ה' מִמִּצְרַיִם בְּיָד חֲזֶקָה, וּבִזְרֹעַ נְטוּיָה, וּבְמֹרָא גָּדֹל, וּבְאֹתוֹת וּבְמֹפְתִים.

2. Haggadah

Not through an angel, not through a seraph, not through any emissary. No, it was the Holy One, His glory, His own presence. לֹא עַל־יְדֵי מַלְאָךְ, וְלֹא עַל־יְדֵי שָׂרָף, וְלֹא עַל־יְדֵי שָׁלִּיחַ, אֶלֶא הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא בִּכְבוֹדוֹ וּבְעַצְמוֹ.

3. Num. 20:16 במדבר פרק כ פסוק טז

We cried to the LORD and He heard our plea, and He sent a messenger who freed us from Egypt. Now we are in Kadesh, the town on the border of your territory. וַנּצְעָק אֶל־יְהוָה ׁ וַיִּשְׁמְע קֹלֵנוּ וַיִּשְׁלָח מַלְאֶׁךְ וַיּצִאַנוּ מִמִּצְרֶיִם וְהִנֵּה אֲנִחְנוּ בְקָבֹשׁ עִיר קְצֵה גְבוּלֶךְ:

4. Ex. 3:10 .4

Come, therefore, I will send you to Pharaoh, and you shall free My people, the Israelites, from Egypt.

ּוְעַתְּה לְּלָה וְאֶשְׁלְחֲךֶ, אֶל־פַּרְעֻה וְהוֹצְא אֶת־עַמִּי בְנִי־ יִשִּׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרַיִם:

5. Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Chametz U-Matzah 7:2

If the son is grown up and intelligent, he should inform him about everything that happened to us in Egypt, and about the miracles that were wrought for us by our teacher Moses; all in accordance with the son's understanding.

5. מ"ת להרמב"ם הל' חמץ ומצה פרק ז הלכה ב

וְאָם הָיָה הַבֵּן גָּדוֹל וְחָכָם מוֹדִיעוֹ מַה שֶׁאֵרַע לְנוּ בְּמִצְרַיִם וְנִסִּים שֶׁנַּעֲשׂוּ לְנוּ עַל יְדֵי משֶׁה רַבֵּנוּ הַכֵּל לְפִי דִּעְתּוֹ שֶׁל בַּו:

II. WHERE IT COMES FROM

6. Isaiah 63:9 6. ישעיהו פרק סג פסוק ט

In all their troubles He was troubled, And the angel of His Presence delivered them. In His love and pity He Himself redeemed them, raised them, and exalted them all the days of old. בְּכָל־צָרָתְם | לא [לְוֹ] צָּר וּמֵלְאָךְ פָּנִיוֹ הְוֹשִׁיעֶׁם בְּאַהְבָתְוֹ וּבְחֶמְלָתִוֹ הָוּא גְאָלֶם וַיְנַטְּלֵם וַיְנַשְׁאָם כָּל־יְמֵי עוֹלֶם:

1. For more on this see David Henshke, "The Lord Brought Us Forth From Egypt': On the Absence of Moses in the Passover Haggadah" *AJS Review*, 31:1 (2007) 61–73.

7. LXX Esaias [Isaiah] 63:8b-9

^{8b}And He became to them salvation ⁹out of all affliction. It was no ambassador or angel but the LORD Himself that saved them, because He loved them and spared them; He Himself redeemed them, raised them, and exalted them all the days of old.

III. WHY?

8. Haggadah .s

Blessed is the One who has kept His promise to Israel – blessed is He. For the Holy One calculated the end and fulfilled what He had spoken to our father Avraham in the Covenant between the Pieces.

בְּרוּךְ שׁוֹמֵר הַבְּטָחָתוֹ לְיִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּרוּךְ הוּא. שֶׁהַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא חִשַּׁב אֶת־הַקֵּץ, לַעֲשׁוֹת בְּמוֹ שֶׁאָמֵר לְאַבְרָהָם אָבִינוּ בִּבְרִית בֵּין הַבְּתָרִים.

9. Haggadah

And this [promise] is what has stood by our ancestors and us; for it was not only one man who rose up to destroy us: in every single generation people rise up to destroy us – but the Holy One, blessed be He, saves us from their hands.

9. הגדה של פסח

ְוְהִיא שֶׁעְמְדָה לַאֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְלְנוּ. שֶׁלֹּא אֶחָד בִּּלְבָד עְמַד עָלֵינוּ לְכַלוֹתֵנוּ, אֶלָא שֶׁבְּכָל דּוֹר וָדוֹר עוֹמְדִים עָלֵינוּ לְכַלוֹתֵנוּ, וְהַקְּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא מַצִילֵנוּ מִיָּדָם.

10. Haggadah

Go and learned what Lavan the Aramean sought to do to our father Yaakov: Pharaoh condemned only the boys to death, but Lavan sought to uproot everything, as it is written: "An Aramean sought my father's death, and he went down to Egypt and resided there, just a handful of souls; and there he became a nation – large, mighty, and great."

10. הגדה של פסח

צֵא וּלְמֵד מַה בָּקֵשׁ לֶבֶן הָאֲרַמִּי לַצְשׁוֹת לְיַצְקֹב אָבִינוּ: שֶׁפַּרְעהׁ לֹא גָזַר אֶלָּא עַל הַוְּכָרִים, וְלְבָן בִּקֵשׁ לַעֲקֹר אֶת־ הַכּּל. שֶׁנָּאֶמַר: ״אֲרַמִּי אֹבֵד אָבִי, וַיֵּרֶד מִצְרַיְמָה וַיָּגָר שְׁם בִּכֹל. שֶׁנָּאֶמַר: ״אֲרַמִּי אֹבֵד אָבִי, וַיֵּרֶד מִצְרַיְמָה וַיָּגָר שְׁם בִּלְתִי מְעָט, וַיְהִי שָׁם לְגוֹי גָּדוֹל, עָצוּם וָרְב.״

How We Shaped the Haggadah in the 20th Century²

11. R. Eleazer of Worms, Pesach Sermon

For each word a finger goes into the cup of wine and they spill out a drop, ... matching the sword of the Holy One, blessed be He, which has sixteen sides. And there are sixteen mentions of "plague" in Jeremiah. Teaching us that we will not be injured. Based on this our ancestors created this custom. And sixteen times the word *chayyim* appears [in Ps. 119), and sixteen people read from the Torah each week, matching the sixteen lambs that are sacrificed in a week. Also "she [gammatria = 16] is a tree of life to those who grasp her. And one just not ridicule the custom of our holy ancestors.

11. דרשה לפסח של הרוקח

על כל תיבה אצבא ידם בכוס היין ומטיפת לחוץ. ... כנגד חרבו של הקב״ה י״ו פנים, וי״ו פעמים דבר בירמיה, לומר לנו לא יזיק, מיכן סמכו אבותינו. וי״ו חיים אחיה ב״תמניא אפי״, י״ו אנשים קורין בשבוע לתורה כנגד י״ו כבשים המקריבים בשבוע, זהו ״עץ חיים הי״א למחזיקים בה.״ ואין להתלוצץ על מנהג אבותינו הקדושים.

12. Darkhei Moshe, O.C. 473:18

And it seems that this is an allusion to the sword of the Holy One, blessed be He, that is called *Yohakh*, which is the angel responsible for vengeance as in known to the Kabbalists. The custom is to cast from the cup with the finger to allude to what is written [Ex. 8:15]: "It is the finger of God."

12. דרכי משה או"ח סימן תעג ס"ק יח

ונראה שרומזים כאן שחרבו של הקב״ה נקרא יוה״ך והוא מלאך ממונה על הנקמה כידוע למקובלים. ונוהגים לזרוק מן הכוס באצבע לרמוז על מה שנאמר (שמות ח׳:ט״ו) ״אצבע אלהים הוא.״

13. Mishnah Berurah, 473, 75

This corresponds to the letters *yud-vav* from the name of God who struck Pharaoh.

13. משנה ברורה סימן תעג ס"ק עה

כנגד אותיות י"ו משמו של הקב"ה שהכה את פרעה:

14. R. Reuven Margaliot, Haggadah Be'er Miriam

And we can further explain that the plagues are only a small drop from the cups of retribution that the God will make those that persecute Israel drink from in the future.

14. הגדה של פסח באר מרים

ועוד יש לפרש, שהוא רמז כי מכות אלו הן כטיפות מכוס התרעלה שעתיד הקב״ה להשקות כל המצירים לישראל.

15. Lord Sacks, Haggadah, p. 70

Many explanations have been offered. The most beautiful is that of Abudraham, who interprets it in accordance with the verse in Proverbs, "Do not rejoice when your enemy falls" (24:17). Even as we give thanks for the miracle of the plagues, as a result of which our ancestors gained their freedom, we also shed a symbolic tear for those who suffered.

16. Artscroll Mesorah Series Haggadah, p. 127

Abarbanel, however, explains that we should remove the wine because "You should not rejoice when your enemy falls" (Mishlei 24:17).

2. For more on this see Zvi Ron, "Our Own Joy is Lessened and Incomplete': The History of an Interpretation of Sixteen Drops of Wine at the Seder" *Hakirah* 19 (2015) 237–255.