

Seder Moed | Masechet Pesachim 113–119 | Shabbat Parashat VaYikra | 1–7 Nissan (Mar. 14–20)

Daf 113: הַמִּתְנַבֵּר עַל עֲצָמוֹ – OVERCOMING INCLINATIONS

בן הא הא אופר:
לפוס צערא אגרא
Ethics of the Fathers 5:21 • פרקי אבות ה"א

Observance of *mitzvot* is not always simple. At times, considerable effort is required to fulfill *mitzvot*. Although people know they need to fulfill a particular mitzvah, it can still be challenging. Occasionally, a person might not have the energy or will-power to follow through.

On this *daf*, the Talmud teaches that a person is more greatly rewarded for fulfilling a mitzvah that is difficult to perform than for a mitzvah that comes easily.

Rabbi Yochanan compared this situation to that of a needy person who found a wallet filled with money in the street. On the one hand, the person is aware of the obligation to fulfill the mitzvah of *hashavat aveidah* (return of a lost object) — because the lost wallet had *simanim* (identifying marks). On the other hand, returning the money is difficult for a needy person who is hungry, as the money could be used to buy food. When this person overcomes the challenge and chooses to fulfill the mitzvah of *hashavat aveidah*, that act is worthy of great praise and reward.

Daf 114: מָה עוֹשִׂים בַּלַּיִל הַסֵּדֶר? –
WHAT DO WE DO ON SEDER NIGHT?

The first ritual element of the Seder is “*Kadesh*.” We pour the first cup of wine and recite two blessings over it: 1) “*Boreh pri ha’gefen*” 2) “*Kiddush*” This is the view of the Beit Hillel.

Later, we move on to “*karpas*.” ... Before the festive meal, we take a green vegetable, dip it in saltwater and eat it. Why is this done? So that the children ask, “*Mah nishtanah ha’lailah ha’zeh mi’kol ha’leilot? she’be’chol ha’leilot ein anu mat’bilin ...*” (How is this night different from all other nights? On all other nights we do not [require] dipping [foods]...). Maharal of Prague (Judah Loew ben Bezalel) said that the word “*karpas*” contains an interesting hint. He notes that the word “*karpas*” spelled backward contains the letters of the word “*pah’rech*” (hard labor), which alludes to the hard labor our ancestors endured in Egypt. In addition, the letter “*samekh*” (60 in gematria) at the end of the word *karpas* alludes to the 600,000 Israelites who were enslaved in Egypt (60 myriads = 600,000).

FROM THE TALMUD
SEDER MOED
MASECHET PESACHIM
DAF 118

מן התלמוד:
סדר מועד, מסכת פסחים דף ק"ח:

”בשעה שהפיל נמרוד הרשע את אברהם אבינו לתוך כבשן האש, אמר גבריאל לפני הקב”ה: ריבונו של עולם, ארד ואצנן ואציל את הצדיק מכבשן האש.”

Translation

Heepil ... He threw
Kivshan ha’esh ... Fiery furnace
E’rehd ... I will descend
E’tzanen ... I will cool
Ah’tzeel ... I will save

Explanation

The *Gemara* recounts how God Himself miraculously saved Avraham Avinu from the fiery furnace and later relates how the angel Gavriel saved Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah from a fiery furnace.

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Daf 115: "כֹּרֵךְ" – "KORECH" SANDWICH

In *Sefer Bamidbar* we read that the *Korban Pesach* (Paschal Offering) was to be eaten with *matzah* and *maror* — “*ahl matzot u’merorim yo’cheluhu*,” (with *matzah* and *maror* one must eat the *Korban Pesach*). From this Torah verse, *Hillel HaZakein* interpreted that *matzah* and *maror* need to be eaten together, at once. *Hillel HaZakein* lived during the second *Beit HaMikdash* era, and he had the privilege of offering the *Korban Pesach*. *Hillel* ate *matzah*, *maror*, and the *Korban Pesach*’s meat together, in one sandwich. However, today, since there is no longer the *Beit HaMikdash* or *Korban Pesach*, there is no Torah mitzvah to eat *matzah* and *maror* together. Nevertheless, we still eat *matzah* and *maror* together as a “*zecher l’mikdash ke’Hillel*,” an act reminiscent of *Hillel*’s custom during Temple days.



Daf 116: "יַחַץ" ו"מַצִּית" – "YACHATZ" AND "MAGGID"

“*Yachatz*” refers to the *matzah* used to fulfill the *mitzvah* of *achilat matzah* (eating *matzah*), which is split into two pieces. *Yachatz*, from the word “*chetzi*” (half).

Why is the *matzah* split? The Torah calls *matzah* “*lechem oni*” (poor man’s bread). Since the needy were not used to having an entire bread loaf, rather just half, we split the *matzah* and eat one half.

“*Maggid*” — after the second of the Seder’s four cups of wine has been poured, we begin reciting the *Haggadah*, in which we tell the story of the Exodus from Egypt. Before we read the *Haggadah*, we ask, “How is *this* night different?” Why do we ask this question? Because the story of the Exodus from Egypt is retold by posing questions and offering answers, one person asks, and the other responds to the questions.



Daf 117: אַרְבַּע כּוֹסוֹת – THE FOUR CUPS

A mitzvah is fulfilled by drinking four cups on Seder night. Rava explained that the *chachamim* instituted this mitzvah because we behave like “*b’nei chorin*” (free people) on that night. We demonstrate that this is the anniversary of our departure from Egypt — along with drinking each cup, we perform another *mitzvah*.

- First cup**— we recite *kiddush* (sanctification [of the day]);
- Second cup**— we recite the *Haggadah* (telling [the story of the Exodus]);
- Third cup**— we recite *Birkat HaMazon* (Grace after Meals);
- Fourth cup**— we recite *Hallel* ([Psalms] of praise). [\[Cont’d on p. 3\]](#)



Dvar Torah VAYIKRA וַיִּקְרָא

Regarding the *Korban Ohf* (Bird Offering), the Torah commands— “And he shall remove its crop.” Meaning, before doing the sacrifice, the “crop,” which is a central organ of the bird’s digestive system, must be removed. However, regarding a *Korban Behaymah* (Animal Offering), there is no commandment to remove a portion of its stomach before offering the sacrifice. Rather, it says: “And the *kohen* offered all of the sacrifice on the *mizbe’ach* (altar).”

Why is there a difference between animal and bird offerings? The *Midrash* explains there is a significant difference between the way the two species are fed. Birds float in the air and fly all over the world, hunting and eating things that pass by their mouths. A bird does not ask permission from any field owner before taking the food it eats. In contrast, animals generally live in their owner’s stall, eating only food supplied by their owner. Therefore, the Torah commands that in the case of a bird offering, its organs used to digest food eaten without permission must be removed. Only the animal portions that are flawlessly clean and clear were to be placed upon the *mizbe’ach*; portions that would possess a “pleasing fragrance for God.”



[Cont'd from p. 4] **Zecheh l'yetziat mitzrayim** (A reminder of the Exodus from Egypt): During the Friday night *Kiddush*, we recite the phrase — “zecheh l'yetziat mitzrayim.” What is the connection between Shabbat and the Exodus from Egypt? *Ba'alei HaTosafot* (medieval European commentators) explain that the phrase “zecheh l'yetziat mitzrayim” highlights the impact of the hard labor forced upon the Israelites in Egypt. This included all of the work prohibited on Shabbat. Therefore, on Shabbat, when we rest and refrain from performing a *melachah* (39 types of prohibited labor), and say, “zecheh l'yetziat mitzrayim,” to declare our thanks to God for taking us out of Egypt.



Daf 118: הַהֵלֵל הַגָּדוֹל – THE GREAT HALLEL

Chapter 136 of *Tehillim* (Psalms) is called “The Great Hallel.” The chapter has this name because it states that God provides bread and nourishment to all the people of the world. In chapter 136, recited as part of the Shabbat morning prayers, each verse ends with the words — “*ki l'olam Chasdoh*” (for God’s mercy endures forever).

“*Hodu laShem ki tov*” (Give thanks to God, for God is good) — *ki l'olam Chasdoh*” (for His mercy is eternal).



Daf 119: אֶפִּיקוֹמָן – AFIKOMAN


**KEEP
CALM
AND
FIND THE
AFIKOMEN**



At the end of the *Seder*, we eat a final piece matzah as a remembrance to the *Korban Pesach* (Paschal Offering). This portion of matzah is called the “*afikoman*.” The term “*afikoman*” is comprised of two Aramaic words: “*afiku*,” meaning, “remove” and “*mahn*,” meaning “types of sweets.” Once, people were accustomed to eating a variety of sweets after the festive meal. When the diners finished eating, they would say “*afiku*,” or “remove” [the dishes] and bring the “*mahn*.”

After the final portion of matzah is eaten, *halahah* prohibits eating anything else that night. Therefore, the Mishnah states that “*afiku mahn*” is not said on Seder night, since nothing is to be eaten after the final matzah. Because of this *halachah*, the *matzah* eaten at the end of the meal is colloquially called “*afikoman*.”



QUESTIONS FOR THE WEEK

1. Who was accustomed to eat a “sandwich” on Seder night?
2. What food is eaten on Seder night to encourage children to ask questions?
3. From what language is the word “*afikoman*”?

*NOTE

ALL ANSWERS CAN BE FOUND
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ארץ ישראל היפה

SOUTHERN ISRAEL

FROM YAVNEH TO ASHKELON • מיבנה לאשקלון



Our next stop is Ashdod, founded in 1956 by 26 families who emigrated to Israel from Morocco. As the city's development was placed in Ashdod Company Ltd.'s hands,

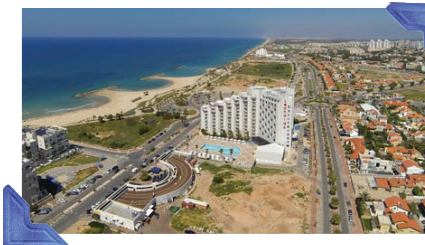


Ashdod was developed using a master plan, with separate residential and industrial areas. The port of Ashdod was built from scratch. When it opened in 1965, Ashdod was one of the world's largest artificial ports. Today, Ashdod port handles 60% of Israeli imports and exports. The city has grown along with the port is Israel's 6th largest city, with a population of over 225,000.



From Ashdod, we head south to our final stop: Ashkelon, which was a Philistine city during Biblical times. The modern city of Ashkelon was founded in 1949.

The city has grown steadily and today boasts a population of 144,000 residents. Ashkelon is the largest city near the Gaza Strip. Ashdod has been subjected to many barrages of rocket attacks launched from Gaza over the past decade.



From Rechovot, we head back towards the coast. Our first stop is in Yavneh. This ancient city has existed since biblical times. The city is best known as the location to

which Rabbi Yochanan Ben Zakkai moved the Sanhedrin after the destruction of the second Beit HaMikdash. The modern city of Yavneh was established in October 1948 as a transit camp for new immigrants. Yavneh remained a poor development town until the mid-1970s, when it began to develop as a Tel Aviv suburb. From that time, Yavneh grew rapidly into the city of 46,000 residents it is today.



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