



Guide to Jewish Religious Practice

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III. Blessing for Various Occasions

The Psalmist said: "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof" (Pg. 24: 1). Taking this statement literally, and deeming it appropriate to acknowledge the fruits of the earth as a gift from the Lord, the rabbis instituted the practice of reciting a benediction when partaking of any of them.

Hence, Judaism prescribes blessings to be said before and after eating, as well as before enjoying fragrant aromas, or upon seeing pleasing and awe-inspiring sights. In this way, the satisfaction of a physical craving is raised into the realm of the spirit. Eating becomes a religious act (Hertz, Daily Prayer Book, p. 961).

Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook elaborates this concept, explaining that physical enjoyment fulfills its purpose only if it serves at the same time as a vehicle for moral satisfaction, i.e., the acknowledgment of God in the world. A person who partakes of things without saying a blessing first, and uses them only for the satisfaction of physical needs, reduces the value of the thing enjoyed by not fulfilling its higher purpose in the world (Kook, 'Olat Re'iyah, 1:345).

He further stresses that holiness rests in man's seeking moral fulfillment even in physical pleasures. When man acknowledges God with a benediction, and thus recognizes God's creation in whatever he enjoys, he will experience a heightened appreciation of God's grace, lovingkindness, and wisdom which are present in all creation (ibid., p. 347).

I. Blessings Before Food

Benedictions are said before eating any food or drinking any beverage. Each benediction begins with the words: baruch atah adonai elokeinu melech haolam. The ending depends on what is to be eaten or drunk.

For all fruit that grows on a tree the benediction is boreh pri haetz (O.H. 202:1). A tree is defined as a plant whose branches do not perish in the winter, and whose leaves grow from the trunk and from the branches but not from the roots (O.H. 203:2). This would exclude the banana tree, whose branches grow anew every year. Dried fruit has the status of ordinary fruit (O.H. 202:9 in B.H. 19).

For things that grow in or near the earth, such as vegetables, beans, potatoes, or turnips, the benediction is boreh pri haadamah (O.H. 203: 1).

For foods which are not the product of the soil, such as meat, fish, milk, and cheese, and for all beverages except wine, the benediction is shehakol nihyeh bidvaro; (O.H. 204: 1). For pastry, the talmudic pat haba'ah b'chisnin, or "food made from the dough" of any of

the five species of grain, kneaded mainly with fat, oil, honey, milk, eggs, or fruit juice, but not with water exclusively, or for dough filled with fruit, meat, cheese, or the like, the benediction is boreh minei m'zonot (O.H. 168:6, 208:2).

For bread, because it is the staff of life, there is a specific individual blessing: hamotzi lechem min haaretz (O.H. 167:2). Bread is the product of a baking process. If it is then boiled, or boiled before and then baked (as the modern bagel), it still has the status of bread (O.H. 168:13-14).

Wine, too, because of its distinction as a beverage, has a special benediction: boreh pri hagafen (O.H. 202:1).

Vegetables and fruits that are eaten both raw and cooked have the same benediction in both states (O.H. 202:12, 205: 1). But for any vegetable that is usually eaten cooked, the benediction when eaten raw is shehakol (ibid.). When eaten cooked, the blessing is boreh pri haetz for fruit (O.H. 202:12) and boreh pri ha'adamah for vegetables (O.H. 205:1).

When one eats several foods that have different blessings, the more significant food determines the benediction to be recited (O.H. 204:12).

At a meal, the benediction for bread at the beginning is sufficient for all the food and beverages that will be served except for the wine, which always commands a benediction for itself (O.H. 177:1, 174:1).

If one eats or drinks for medicinal purposes, a benediction should be recited even over forbidden food, which becomes permissible when taken as a medicine (O.H. 204:8). If, however, the medicine is bitter and unpalatable, no benediction is necessary (Rama, O.H. 208:8).

Once the benediction has been recited, one should eat immediately without conversation or too long a pause (O.H. 167:6).

2: Grace After Meals

The Torah, followed by the Talmud, prescribes a benediction after eating as well (Deut. 8:10; B. Ber. 35a). There are three forms of the Grace after meals:

1. boreh nefashot (B. Ber. 37a).
2. bracha achat meein shalosh (M. Ber. 6:8; B. Ber. 37a)
3. birkat hamazon (ibid)

- a. The first and simplest is baruch atah adonai eloheinu melech haolam boreh n'fashot rabot v'chesronan al kol ma shebarata l'hachayot bahem nefesh kol chai, baruch chat haolamim.

This benediction is recited over foods which are preceded by the benedictions boreh pri haetz, boreh pri ha'adamah or shehakol (O.H. 207:1).

- b. The rabbis gave special consideration to seven species with which the Bible says the Land of Israel was blessed: "For the Lord thy God bringeth thee into a good land. . . a land of wheat and barley, and vines and fig trees and pomegranates; a land of olive trees and honey" (Deut. 8:7-8).

Hence after eating these we recite the bracha achat meeyn shalosh, "one benediction which has the form of three," i.e., a shortened form of the longer Grace after meals (O.H. 208). It is recited after foods which are preceded by the benedictions boreh minei mezonot or boreh pri hagafen, and for the fruits enumerated among the seven species: rigs, pomegranates, olives, and dates (the honey referred to in this verse is not of bees but of dates).

The shortened form, also known as ah hamichyah, begins with the usual formula and then varies according to what was eaten: after wine, al hagefen v'al pri hagefen, after fruit, al haetz v'al pri haetz, after pastry, al hamichyah v'al hakalkalah. When two varieties have been eaten, a combination of the above is recited. Then follows a summary of the benedictions in the longer Grace after meals. Before the closing formula, there is an insertion for Sabbaths, Rosh Hodesh, or festivals. The closing sentence again indicates what food was eaten.

- c. The full Birkat Hamazon is recited whenever the meal was preceded by hamotzi lechem min ha'arets.

Like the benediction before the meal, the Grace afterwards raises the satisfaction of a physical craving into the realm of the spirit. Through the Grace, the family table becomes the family altar. The prayer not only expresses gratefulness for the food, but also binds the participants to their people by expressing gratitude to God for past favors to the people as a whole and hope for its blessed future.

Before the actual Grace is recited an introductory psalm is said. On weekdays we recite Psalm 137, al naharot bavel, to express our mourning for the destruction of Zion, an event which should not be forgotten even during our meals. On Sabbaths and festivals we recite psalm 126. In place of the sorrowful remembrance of past tragedies, it is an optimistic vision of the future rebuilding of Zion.

When three or more adults have eaten together and each one has to recite the Grace after meals, a formal invitation to say Grace is said (M. Ber. 7:1; O.H. 192: 1), on the

principle that before a sacred function is performed there should be an invitation to the participants to join. This helps establish the proper mood for the ritual. kol milei dik'dushah ba'ey hazmanah (Zohar, quoted in M.A. 1 on O.H. 192:1).

This quorum of three is called a mezuman from the name of the prayer, Birkat Zimun (from the verb z-m-n, "to invite"). The honor of leading the mezuman is accorded by the host to the most distinguished person present (Sep. 47a). If a Kohen is present he should be given the honor (O.H. 201:2); otherwise it is given to a talmid hakham, a learned person, or to a guest (O.H. 201:1-2).

The leader calls the people together with rabotai n'varech, and they respond with yehi shem adonai m'voach meatah v'ad olam. The leader responds with birshut maranal v'rabanal v'rabotai n'varech sheachalnu mishelo asking the permission of those present to praise God. If ten or more adults are present the word eloheinu is added after n'varech. The people respond with baruch sheachalnu mishelo uv'tuvo chayinu. Again if there are ten or more adults present the word eloheinu is added after barukh.

Grace itself then follows. It has four benedictions, designated in the talmud by specific names (13. Ber. 48b):

1. Birkat Hazan praises God for providing food for all. It represents a public thanksgiving for God's goodness to all humanity.
2. Birkat Ha'arets. This benediction has two paragraphs:
 - A. nodeh lecha offers thanks to God for all past favors granted to our people,
 - B. v'al hakol summarizes the preceding enumeration of blessings and concludes with a benediction. On Hanukkah and Purim the special prayer al hanisim assigned for these holidays is recited between the two paragraphs. The Rabbinical Assembly Weekly Prayer Book contains an al hanisim for Yom Ha'atsma'ut as well.
3. boneh yerushalayim. While the previous benedictions were expressions of gratitude for past favors, this is a prayer for the future flowering of Zion and Jerusalem and for the continued blessing of God. It concludes with u'vneh yerushalayim, a prayer for the rebuilding of Jerusalem.

On the Sabbath a special prayer, retzeh, is inserted before u'vneh. On Rosh Hodesh and on festivals ya'aleh v'yavo is inserted before u'vneh, making appropriate reference to the day.

4. hatov v'hameitiv. This benediction was added around 137 C.E. after the revolt of Bar Kokhba, According to the Talmud, it was instituted when the Roman authorities relented and granted permission to bury the "slain of Betar," the last Jewish stronghold, whose inhabitants were put to the sword (B. Ber. 48b).

The conclusion of this benediction, l'olam al y'chasrenu, marks the end of the statutory Grace after meals. However, as with the other services, other prayers were added in time, such as the series of short prayers beginning with harachaman. The texts of these vary, but all versions contain a prayer for the host and for those present, a prayer for the coming of Elijah the prophet, and a prayer that we may be worthy to see the days of the Messiah.

This passage includes the words magdil y'shuot malko. On Sabbaths, festivals, and Rosh Hodesh, the word magdil is changed to migdol. Various explanations for this have been given (O.H. 189 in M.A. 1). The verse in question comes from Psalm 18:51, where magdil is used. However, in 11 Samuel 22:51, where Psalm 18 is repeated, the word migdol is read, it has been suggested that the original text of the Grace had magdil, but that someone added the parenthetical phrase v-b-s-"b m-g-d-v-l indicating that the reading is migdol in 11 Samuel. This was later misread as an abbreviation for u'vshabat, and it was assumed that we are to say migdol on the Sabbath. Whatever the reason, this has become the established custom, and as usual in such cases, it is easier to reinterpret than to abolish. The passage ends with oseh shalom, the prayer for peace, which has special significance in the Birkat Hamazon. On the verse "And I will give peace in the land" (Lev. 26:6), Rashi comments: "And if you shall say, So there is food and drink; but without peace what good are they? Therefore, with the expression of thanks for food we also pray for peace, which will make it possible for us to enjoy then blessings" (Mateh Mosheh, quoted in Landau, Tselota d'Avraham, 2:556). The final passage, y'ru et adonai is a collection of biblical verses. These are said silently out of consideration for any poor people who may be present at the table. The passage states: "They who fear the Lord know not want" (Ps. 34:10 and "I have been young and now I am old, yet have I not seen a righteous man forsaken, nor his seed begging for food" (Ps. 37:25). Since this is an ideal and a hope rather than a fact, it is better said in a hushed voice.

Since it was felt that the full Grace after meals was a bit too long, many prayer books have a shortened form alongside the full text, One of them is quoted in O.H. 192 in B.H. 1, and it contains all the essential elements required by the Talmud. The shortened Grace may be used when brevity is desired. The United Synagogue has adopted one, with additions in English, for general use in Conservative synagogues.

3: Birkhot Hanehenin

It is quite obvious that within the ambit of the enjoyment of God's blessings, we must include enjoyments that issue via all the senses. In the Siddur edited by Rabbi de Sola Pool for the Sefardic communities, the benedictions are therefore arranged according to the senses used, i.e., taste, smell, sight, hearing, and touch (see also Landau, Tselota d'Avraham, p. 596). We have already enumerated the blessings which are enjoyed by means of the sense of taste. We shall now proceed to the others.

Professor Heschel distinguishes between the approach to nature of the practical secularist and that of the religiously oriented person. Today the prevalent approach is to look at nature as presenting a challenge to us; we seek to discover its secrets, and we use this knowledge in order to exploit it. The religious person looks at nature with a wonder born of awe. His reaction is that of worship and gratitude. This sense of wonder is often expressed with benedictions. These involve mainly the senses of sight and hearing (see Heschel, *God in Search of Man*, pp. 95-99).

Thus, on seeing a rainbow one says the benediction, *zokher habrit v'neeman bivrito v'kayam b'maamaro*, "who remembers the covenant, is faithful to His covenant, and keeps His promise"; on seeing the wonders of nature, such as lightning or high mountains *oseh maaseh v'rashit*, "who has made the creation"; on seeing the ocean (for one who does not see it frequently), *sheasah et hayam hagadol*, "who has made the great sea"; on seeing beautiful trees or animals, *shecachah lo b'olamo*, "who has such as these in His world"; on seeing a man learned in the Torah, *shechalak mehachmato lereav*, "who has imparted of His wisdom to them that fear Him"; on seeing a man of great intellectual distinction, *shenatan mechachmato l'vasar vadam*, "who has imparted of His wisdom to flesh and blood"; on seeing an exalted ruler, *shenatan micvodo l'vasar vadam*, "who has given of His glory to flesh and blood."

For the sense of hearing we have the following benedictions: on hearing thunder, *shecocho ugvurato maleh olam*, "whose strength and might fill the world"; on hearing bad tidings, *dayan haemet*, "the true judge"; on hearing good tidings, *hatov v'hametiv*, "who is good and dispenses good."

For the sense of smell we have the following: on smelling fragrant spices, *boreh mineh v'samim*, "who creates divers kinds of spices"; on smelling fragrant herbs or flowers, *boreh isbey v'samim*, "who creates odorous plants"; on smelling fragrant trees or aromatic bark, *boreh azey v'samim* "who creates fragrant wood"; on smelling fruits, *hanoten reyach tov baperot*, "who gives a goodly scent to fruit" (see Dvorkes, *Siddur Minhat Yerushalayim*, pp. 321-31).

In addition to the above benedictions, there are also benedictions of thanksgiving and benedictions recited before the performance of a mitzvah. We shall discuss these benedictions when we treat the respective subjects. At this point, we shall mention only those most frequently recited.

4. Benedictions of Thanksgiving

Whenever we experience something new, such as eating fruit for the first time in its season, the advent of a holiday, or a joyous occasion in the family, we recite *sheheheyanu v'kiyimanu v'higiyanu lazman hazeh*. This benediction is either added to the benediction already required, as before eating a fruit, or is recited by itself. Another benediction which is a prayer of thanksgiving is the *birkat hagomel*, which expresses

gratitude to God after having come through danger unharmed. According to the Talmud there are four who should recite this benediction: one who has made a sea journey, one who has traveled through a desert, one who was seriously ill and recovered, and one who was imprisoned and released (B. Ber. 54b; O.H. 219:1).

The common denominator of the four is that the life of a person was endangered. We therefore generalize and say that anyone who has passed through a harrowing experience that has endangered his life should recite this benediction (O.H. 219:9). We extend this today, for example, to one who has survived an automobile accident, or has traveled across the ocean by air. It has become the custom to recite this benediction after the second Torah blessing when one is called up for an 'aliyah (O.H. 219:3). The person reciting the benediction says: hagomel l'chayavim tovo shegmalani kol tov, "who grants favor to the undeserving, that He has shown me kindness"; and the congregation responds: mi shegmalkha kol tov hu yigmalkha kol tov selah, "He who has shown you kindness, may He deal kindly with you forever" (O.H. 219:2).

In the category of benedictions recited before the performance of a ritual, we shall mention here only two: the benediction recited at the washing of the hands before meals, and the one recited before affixing a Mezuzah to the doorpost of one's home.

5. Washing the Hands before Meals

We have already mentioned that a religious ritual lifts a biological act from the realm of the physical and raises it to the realm of the spiritual. Hence, the benedictions before eating.

The rabbis made a distinction between casual eating, *achilat arai*, and a regular meal, *seudat kevah* (B.Yoma 79b). Lest the distinction become arbitrary, they based it on the eating of bread and the recital of *hamotsi*. Bread is the staff of life, and therefore the eating of bread determines whether the meal is considered casual or regular. A meal at which bread is eaten must be preceded by the washing of the hands.

Since this washing of the hands is not a hygienic measure (because one has to wash even if his hands are clean), but rather a religious ritual, it must be done in a specified way.

The washing should be performed with a vessel, *kli*, and it should result from human effort, *ko'ach gavra*. Hence, holding one's hands under an open faucet with the water already running is to be avoided (O.H. 159:7). One should fill a vessel with the water, hold it in one hand, and pour it over the other, and then do the same with the second hand.

The vessel should not be chipped or broken (O.H. 159:1 in M.D. ad loc.). After both hands are washed, one should recite the benediction asher kideshanu bemitsvotav vitsevanu al nitilat yadayim as he proceeds to dry them.

Unit IV

The Sabbath (I): Liturgy

Preparation for the Sabbath

Lighting the Sabbath Candles

Evening Services

Friday Night at Home

Late Friday Night Services

Sabbath morning

The Musaf Service

The Sabbath Noon Meal

Sabbath Afternoon

Minchah

Se'udah Shelishit

Evening Service

Havdalah Service

IV. The Sabbath (I)

2: Lighting the Sabbath Candles

“When all work is brought to a standstill, the candles are lit. Just as creation began with the word, 'Let there be light!' so does the celebration of creation begin with the kindling of lights. It is the woman who ushers in the joy and sets up the most exquisite symbol, light, to dominate the atmosphere of the home " (Heschel, *The Sabbath*, p. 66).

It is a mitzvah to light candles on the eve of the Sabbath, before sunset, at home in the room where the meal is taken.

The commandment applies to men as well as to women, but it revolves more upon women because women are more associated with the home (B. Shab. 31b; Maimonides, *Hil. Shabbat* 5:3; O.H. 263:2, 3). The candles should be lit no later than eighteen minutes before sunset.

Customs vary as to the number of candles to be lit. Some light two candles, one for zachor and one for shamor, the words with which the fourth commandment begins in the two versions of the Decalogue (Exod. 20:8, Deut. 5:12). Some light seven, a favorite number in religious symbolism; some start with two and add one each time there is an addition to the family. The prevalent custom is to light two at all times (O.H. 263:1).

Upon lighting the candles the woman covers her eyes with her hands and recites the benediction *asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu l'hadlik ner shel shabbat*. It is customary to add a silent prayer for the health and welfare of the family (O.H. 263:5 in B.H.).

Covering the eyes is a gesture of prayer which helps in the attainment of Kavanah, concentration. The reason for it here, however, is slightly more complicated. Normally a benediction is recited before the act is performed. This benediction marks the beginning of the Sabbath, and during the Sabbath we are forbidden to create light. Hence the woman lights the candles first, but in order to satisfy the requirement that the benediction be recited before the act, she covers her eyes so as not to see the light. When she removes her hands and sees the light, the benediction is considered to have preceded the act (Rama on O.H. 263:5). Though the lighting of candles is permitted on festivals, the same procedure is followed to avoid differentiation.

The candlesticks used in the kindling of the Sabbath candles should not be removed from the table or touched during the Sabbath (O.H. 263:14).

With the lighting of the candles, even if done earlier than required, the Sabbath has begun for the woman who lit them, and she must observe the Sabbath rules from then on (O.H. 263:10). The other members of the family are not subject to this restriction,

and may do work until the official beginning of the Sabbath (O.H. 263:14). There are those who maintain that the woman may make a reservation that the lighting of the candles does not prevent her from doing certain work until the Sabbath has officially begun (O.H. 263:10).

3. Evening Services

While the woman ushers in the Sabbath with the lighting of the Sabbath candles, the man does so with the evening prayer.

We begin with the Minhah service, which is still a weekday prayer and hence is the same as on every other day of the week; no Tahanun is recited, however.

The Sabbath evening service itself begins with Ma'ariv. It is customary on Friday night to start the Ma'ariv service earlier than on weekday evenings (O.H. 267:2).

During the sixteenth century, the Kabbalists in Safed initiated the practice of Kabbalat Shabbat, inaugurating the Sabbath with prayer before the Ma'ariv service. This custom spread and is now the established procedure for the Friday night service.

The incentive for the Kabbalists came from an old personification of the Sabbath as a bride. Solomon Schechter has written: "The Sabbath was a living reality, to be welcomed after six days absence with that expectant joy and impatient love with which the groom meets the bride" (Schechter, *Studies in Judaism II*, p. 228). This is based on what the Talmud tells about Rabbis Hanina and Yannai. Rabbi Hanina wrapped himself in a robe on the eve of the Sabbath and said: *Bo'u venetseh likrat Shabbat haMalkah* "Come let us go out to greet the Sabbath queen." Rabbi Yannai attired himself on the eve of the Sabbath and said: *Bo'i khalah, bo'i khalah* (B. Shab, 119a; B. B.Q. 32a).

This personification found its formal expression among the Safed Kabbalists, who chose Psalms 95-99 and Psalm 29 to express it. These psalms speak of creation rejoicing before the Lord. They thus remind us of the six days of creation, culminating in the Sabbath.

The hymn *Lekha Dodi*, which follows, is from the same period. It was written by the mystic Shlomo Halevi Alkabetz and incorporates the phraseology of the Talmud. It is the climax of the liturgical personification of the Sabbath.

When the last stanza of *Lekha Dodi* is reached, the congregation turns and faces the entrance to the place of worship. This is a gesture of welcome to the Sabbath reminiscent of the practice of actually going out to meet the Sabbath. It has also become a custom at this point in the service to welcome and comfort any mourners who have suffered bereavement during the preceding week. All mourning is suspended with the approach of the Sabbath, which officially begins when the congregation has completed

It is the custom for the mourners to wait in the anteroom and be ushered in after the conclusion of Lekha Dodi. When the mourners enter they meet a congregation facing them who offer the condolence: HaMakom yenachem etkhem betokh sha'ar avlelei Tsion veYerushalayyim (May the Lord comfort you among the other mourners for Zion and Jerusalem).

Much older is the practice of reciting Psalm 92, which follows. It is the psalm that the Levites recited while the tamid offering was being brought on Saturday (B. Tamid 33b). When the Sabbath coincides with, or immediately follows, one of the festivals, the evening service begins with this psalm.

3. Evening Services: Ma'ariv

In some communities it is customary to recite Bemeh Madlikin, the second chapter of the Mishnah of Tractate Shabbat, immediately before (O.H. 270: 1). The origin of this practice is that it delayed the Ma'ariv service a bit so that latecomers would not have to stay alone in the synagogue to complete their prayers. Synagogues used to be located in the fields outside the city, and going home alone was fraught with danger (O.H. 270:1 and Kol Bo 37b in the name of the Geonim). This chapter was chosen because it contains laws dealing with the approach of the Sabbath (O.H. 270.1 in M.A.).

In other synagogues the passage is said after Qiddush; at this point it does not delay the beginning of the Sabbath.

The Qeri'at Shema' of the Ma'ariv service is identical with that of the weekdays with the following exceptions. The introductory Vehu Rakhum is omitted because it is not in keeping with the spirit of the Sabbath (see O.H. 2.68:11 in B.H.). The conclusion of the Hashkiveinu is different; the weeknight version ends with the benediction Shomer 'Amo Yisrael Le'ad. Since the Sabbath itself is, in a deeply religious sense, Israel's guardian, the form of the benediction is altered to express the peace which falls upon the Jewish house with the evening of the seventh day. Hence we say: Ufros 'Aleinu Sukkat Shelomekhah. . . Hapores Sukkat Shalom 'Alaynu Val Kol 'Amo Yisrael V'al Yirushalayyim (O.H. 267:3 and ibid. in Tur). Since Gaonic times Vshamru has also been added, as if to say that if we observe the Sabbath, the Sabbath will protect us ('Arukh Hashulhan, O.H. 267:7). We also omit the passage Baruch 'Adonai Le'olam 'Amen V'amen because this passage, with its eighteen sentences, was originally compiled as a substitute for the eighteen benedictions of the weekday 'Amidah. Since the Sabbath 'Amidah consists of seven and, not eighteen benedictions, and since another substitution, Magen 'Avot, is provided later in the service, the passage is properly omitted on Friday night.

The 'Amidah has the same opening and closing benedictions as on weekdays. The thirteen intermediate benedictions are omitted because they are prayers of supplication and induce sadness, which is not in consonance with the Sabbath. Instead, we have a benediction that expresses the sanctity of the Sabbath (O.H. 268:11 in B.H. 1). We must

note, though, that this benediction varies with each of the three Sabbath services, while on festivals the same benediction is recited at each of the services.

The Tur gives an interesting explanation for this variation. The three forms were established to correspond to three Sabbaths: 'Atah Kidashta of Ma'ariv for the Sabbath of Creation, as the content of the prayer would indicate; Yismakh Mosheh of Shaharit for the Sabbath of the granting of the Torah (there is general agreement that the Torah was given on a Sabbath); and the 'Atah Ekhad of Minhah, for the Sabbath of the future (Tur, O.H. 292). (This corresponds to the three basic categories of Franz Rosenzweig in his Star of Redemption: creation, revelation, and redemption.)

After the 'Amidah, Vayekhulu is recited aloud by the congregation while standing (O.H. 268:6). This prayer was first added only on festivals that coincide with the Sabbath, when Vayekhulu is omitted in the 'Amidah. In order not to create distinctions between one Sabbath and another, it became the uniform practice for all Sabbaths (B. Pes. 106a; Tosafot, Zokhrehu).

The prayer that follows is an abbreviated form of the 'Amidah which contains the substance of the seven benedictions (O.H. 268:8). It was not, however, a substitute for the 'Amidah, but rather a chant by the reader which gave the latecomers a chance to finish their prayers with the rest of the congregation (B. Shab. 24b; Rashi and Mordebai).

The prayer is concluded with Qaddish and followed by the Qiddush. Although the Qiddush is recited at home before the meal, it became the custom to recite it in the synagogue as well for the sake of wayfarers, who lodged in the synagogue premises and had their meals there (B. Pes. 101a). This was in the days when every synagogue had a hekdesch (hostel) attached to it. The custom remained even after the reason for its establishment ceased (O.H. 269:1). Today, Qiddush in the synagogue serves as a reminder for those who do not say Qiddush at home.

The service is then concluded with 'Aleinu and Qaddish as on weekdays.

It has become the custom in most synagogues to chant Yigdal or 'Adon Olam, as the concluding hymn of the service.

4. Friday Night at Home

It is customary for parents to bless their children either at the conclusion of the service in the synagogue or upon returning home. For boys the blessing is Yesim Elohim ke'Efraim Ve'khi'Menasheh. For girls the blessing is Yesim Elohim KeSarah, Rivqah, Rakhel, VeLeah. For boys and girls both, Yeverekhekha Adonai Veyismerekha, Ya'er Adonai Panav Elekha Vihunekha, Yisa Adonai Panav Eilekha, Veyaseim Lekha Shalom.

Special hymns are recited at home before the recitation of the Qiddush. The first one is Shalom 'Aleikhem, based on the talmudic statement that two angels accompany every Jew when he returns home from Friday evening services (B. Shab. 119b).

Then the verses from the Book of Proverbs describing the ideal wife are recited (Prov. 31:10-31). Again the connection between the sacredness of the Sabbath and the blessedness of the home is highlighted. The woman is the mainstay of the home.

After these preliminaries the Qiddush follows. It should be recited where the meal will be eaten, and over wine (O.H. 273:1, 10). If there is no wine, the Qiddush is recited over the Hallot (O.H. 289:2; *ibid.* in M.A.; Hayyei Adam 6:9).

After Qiddush the hands are washed and the Motsi is recited. In some places the hands are washed before the Qiddush and the Qiddush is not considered an interruption (O.H. 271:12).

At the beginning of the Sabbath, the table should be covered with a tablecloth. Two Hallot are always used, corresponding to the Lekhem Mishneh the double portion of manna that the children of Israel gathered on Fridays when they were in the desert (Exod. 16:22).

The Hallot should be covered with an appropriate cloth during the recitation of the Qiddush (O.H. 271:9).

When reciting the Motsi, one should place both hands on the two Hallot, then lift them and slice one of them (O.H. 274: 1).

The Talmud already mentions that it was the custom during the Sabbath meal to speak Divrei Torah at the table and to sing songs of praise (B. Meg. 12b). It has become customary to sing Zemirot, special Sabbath hymns, and also to discuss sacred texts. We certainly should not allow any conversation that will mar the sacredness of the day (O.H. 306, 307).

At the conclusion of the meal Birkat Hamazon is recited with the variations for the Sabbath. The introductory psalm is not Psalm 137, which tells of the desolation of Zion, but Psalm 126, which speaks of the restoration of Zion and is, therefore, more appropriate for a day of joy.

Before Uvnei Yerushalayyim a special prayer for the Sabbath, Retse, is introduced (B. Ber. 49a). The prayer concludes with the hope for the restoration of Zion and thus Uvene Yerushalayyim makes a fitting sequel.

Before the final Harahaman a special Harahaman for the Sabbath is added. In the last Harahaman the word Migdol is substituted for Magdil.

5. Late Friday Night Services

Because of economic conditions and other factors in American life, it became difficult for most Jews to attend the Friday evening services at the prescribed time (sundown). To salvage some sense of the sanctity of the Sabbath and some awareness of this service, it became customary to hold Sabbath services later in the evening.

The late Friday night service has many merits. The most important, obviously, is that a large number of people are enabled to attend who otherwise would not have any chance to participate in the Sabbath evening service. It also provides an opportunity for instruction through a discourse or a sermon. Many people have formed the habit of setting aside Friday nights for services at the synagogue.

While this measure was dictated by necessity, it has now become an institution with roots in our synagogue life. Of late, dissident voices have been raised suggesting that the institution is at best a mixed blessing. The standing objection that Kabbalat Shabbat is at sundown, and not an arbitrary hour decided by the ritual committee of the synagogue, is still cogent. The late service mars the traditional concept of ushering in the day with a public service. Furthermore, we have always emphasized that the value of the Sabbath is enhanced by the family spending the evening together at home. This is curtailed by the services later in the evening.

At present the old economic reasons are not as urgent as they were in the past. With the shorter working day it may become possible to reinstate the service at its proper time.

6. Sabbath Morning: Pesuqei Dezimrah

The Sabbath morning procedures are identical with those of a weekday morning as far as ablutions and the prayers said upon rising are concerned. Since the pressure of daily occupations is absent on the Sabbath, the morning service starts later and is longer than on weekdays (Tur, O.H. 28 1; Rama on O.H. 281:1). This adds to the solemnity of the day as well.

The first addition comes in the Pesuqei Dezimrah where a number of psalms are inserted between Hodu and Yehi Khavod. The choice of psalms has been variously interpreted. A medieval commentator finds in them a reference to the ten words (Avot 5: 1) with which the world was created (Abudraham Hashalem, p. 162). A modern commentator suggests that they recall the three fundamental themes of the Sabbath: the creation of the world, the exodus from Egypt, and the Sabbath to come (Munk, *World of Prayer*, 2:21 f.).

The Ashkenazic and Sefardic rites differ on the choice of psalms as well as on the position of Barukh She'amar. The Ashkenazim begin Pesuqei Dezimrah with Barukh She'amar in order to conform to the pattern of beginning and ending with a berakhah. The Sefardim prefer to give latecomers a chance to hear the berakhah and also suggest that since these psalms were later additions, they should be placed before Barukh She'amar (Abudraham Hashalem, p. 164).

On weekdays Pesuqei Dezimrah concludes with Yishtabah. On the Sabbath the complete Birkat Hashir (B. Pes. 118a), as found in the Passover Haggadah, is included (Jur, O.H. 28 1). It follows logically after the Song of the Red Sea since it praises God for the redemption from Egypt.

6. Shabbat Morning: Shaharit

It is customary for the cantor to begin with Shokhen 'Ad on the Sabbath, with Hael on the pilgrimage festivals, and Hamelekh on the High Holy Days. "On the Sabbath, as Nishmat is concluded, the reader begins with Shokhen 'Ad, celebrating God's eternity as the Creator. On Festivals he begins with Hael, acclaiming Him as the omnipotent Protector of His people; and on Rosh Hashannah and Yom Kippur he begins with Hamelekh, proclaiming Him as Sovereign and Judge" (Arzt, Justice and Mercy, p. 42).

The Barekhu is followed by an expanded form of the first benediction before the Shema'. Hameir La'arets which in the weekday service follows immediately after the opening benediction, is preceded by expansions upon the word Hakol, with which that benediction concludes, and which form a proper introduction to Hameir.

Hameir does not conclude with the weekday acrostic but rather with a series of verses beginning with 'Ain Ke'erkekha referring to the world to come, the days of the Messiah, and the resurrection of the dead. Then follows the hymn El Adon, which is an expanded form of the weekday acrostic El Barukh Gadol De'ah (Zohar, Terumah 132a). This is followed by Lael Asher Shavat, a meditation that belongs to a group of seven hymns, one for each day of the week, recounting the work of creation completed on that day. In these hymns, each day proclaimed the praises of God in the words of the psalm set aside for that day (Hertz, Daily Prayer Book, p. 431). From this point to the 'Amidah, the service is identical with that of the weekday.

The 'Amidah follows the pattern of the Ma'ariv 'Amidah. The first and last three benedictions are the same as on weekdays. For the intermediate thirteen benedictions, one, which is different in each service, is substituted (see above). The core of the benediction is a biblical quotation concerning the Sabbath. This is preceded by an introductory paragraph, Yismah Moshe. While Moses is related to every commandment in the Torah, the rabbis ascribed to him a closer affinity to the commandment of the Sabbath. According to the Talmud, God said to Moses: "I have a precious gift in my treasure house called the Sabbath, and I want to give it to Israel" (B. Shab. 10b). The

biblical core is followed by Velo Netatto, a commentary on it telling us that the Sabbath is a peculiarly Jewish institution (based on Mekhilta, ed. Lauterbach, 3:199).

The concluding part of this segment, from 'Am Meqadeshei Shevi'i through Zekher Lema'aseh Vereishit, is part of a prayer beginning with Yismehu. The Sefardic rite includes Yismehun every 'Amidah except Minhah. In the Ashkenazic rite it is absent also in the Ma'ariv 'Amidah, incomplete in Shaharit, but complete in Musaf.

The last paragraph is the same as in Ma'ariv. In some siddurim, a slight textual variation is found. The Ma'ariv text reads Veyanuhu Vah, the Shaharit Veyanuhu Vo and the Minhah Veyanuhu Vam. The grammatical rule demands Vah since Shabbat is the antecedent; all new prayer books have Vah. According to some commentators these variations were not accidental, and some unusual explanations are suggested (O.H. 268 in M.A. 3).

In the Hazarat Hashats, the Qedushah is enlarged with several additional passages, some of which are mentioned in the older sources as part of the weekday Qedushah. Again, the availability of more time led to the addition. Az Beqol corresponds to the sentences in Birkat Yotser that begin with Vehaofanim. The passage Mimqomekha is peculiar to this Qedushah and is reserved for the Sabbath. The Levush explains it as follows. On the Sabbath men strive to reach God with much greater fervor than they do during the rest of the week. Moreover, it was on the Sabbath Day that the Lord, long ago, took His place on His sovereign throne. The abode of His holiness is unknown even to the angels, and they say: Regardless of where it may be, let it be blessed. Even so, we also pray that the glory of God, wherever its abode may be, may shine over us, and that God's Kingdom may speedily arrive so that at long last the greatness and glory of God, of which the Qedushah sings, will become a living reality on earth as well (quoted by Munk, World of Prayer, 2:39 f.).

For the reading of the Torah and the prayers before and after, see above in the discussion of the daily prayers (unit 2).

8. The Sabbath Noon Meal

On Sabbath morning as on every other day, one should not eat prior to the morning prayer. Liquids are permitted, however, or a light breakfast, if required for reasons of health.

The procedure at the Sabbath noon meal is the same as on Friday night. Qiddush is recited over wine before the meal. The text, though called Qiddusha Rabba, the Great Qiddush, is much shorter than the Qiddush recited on Friday night. Essentially, the Qiddush is the benediction over wine (B. Pes. 106a); appropriate biblical quotations were added later, and they are recited today before the benediction over the wine (O H 289:1). It is now customary to recite the Qiddush of the morning meal over other

alcoholic beverages as well (O.H. 289:2 in Sha'are Teshuva). In such cases, the blessing Shehakol is substituted for Borei peri hagafen.

This is followed by the washing of the hands, the Motsi, over Lehem Mishneh as on Friday night, with Zemiroth, devrei Torah, and Birkat Hamazon (O.H. 289:1).

9. Sabbath Afternoon

On Sabbath afternoons during the winter months, beginning with the first Sabbath after Sukkot and ending with the Sabbath before Pesach, it is customary to recite Psalms 104 and 120-134, the fifteen psalms that begin with the words Shir Hama'alot and are therefore termed "Songs of Ascent." In the summer months, beginning with the Sabbath after Pesach and ending with the Sabbath before Rosh Hashanah, we study Pirkei Avot.

The recitation of Psalm 104 starts on the Sabbath when, in the morning, we read the creation story. Since it is also a description of the Ma'aseh Vereishit (work of creation), it is most appropriate at this time. The fifteen psalms that follow also relate to creation according to rabbinic legend (B Suk. 53a f.; Levusha, O.H. 669).

Pirkei Avot begins with: "Moses received the Torah at Sinai." The only festival that comes during the summer months is Shavu'ot, which is Zeman Matan Torahteinu (the season of the giving of our Torah), hence the practice of studying this material during these months (Tur, O.H. 292).

Unit VII

Pesach (I)

Introduction

The Four Parashiyot

Shabbat Hagadol

The Month of Nisan

The Eve of Passover

The Diposal of Leaven

Kashering Utensils

Fobidden Foods

The First Night of Passover

VII. Pesach (I)

1. Introduction

We noted in the preceding unit that the Pilgrimage Festivals have a threefold significance: historical, agricultural, and ideological. We can illustrate these as they apply to Pesach (Passover).

As a historical festival, Pesach commemorates the liberation of the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage. The exodus looms large not only for Pesach but also for a number of other Jewish institutions. The phrase *zekher letsi'at Mitsrayim* ("as a memorial of the exodus from Egypt") occurs frequently in our liturgy. Many of the *mitsvot* have the memory of the exodus as one of their themes. The Decalogue, in proclaiming the sovereignty of God, describes Him as the God who brought us out of the land of Egypt (Exod. 20:2; Deut. 5:6). The Qiddush for Sabbaths and festivals uses the phrase *zekher letsi'at Mitsrayim* and in the third paragraph of the Shema' we recite: "I am the Lord your God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt" (Num. 15:41). Thus Pesach is dedicated to the celebration of this historical event and to its memorialization.

As a festival of nature, Pesach is a springtime holiday that has its parallels in the calendars of other peoples. When nature reawakens and the fields bring forth their fruit again, man is impelled to rejoice. The month of Nisan is called *Hodesh Ha'aviv*, as it is written: "Observe the month of Aviv and keep the Passover unto the Lord thy God" (Deut. 16:1; the term *'aviv* designates the green ears of grain and thus refers to the beginning of the spring harvest). Consequently Pesach was also called *Hag Ha'aviv*, or the spring festival. As time passed, the agricultural theme of the festival was muted and the historical took precedence. However, a number of observances remain to celebrate the rebirth of nature. On the first day of Pesach, at Musaf, we recite the prayer for dew; on the second night we start counting the *'Omer*; and on the Sabbath of the festival it is customary to read the Song of Songs with its description of spring. This constitutes our recognition that the forces in the physical environment which make for physical survival and well-being have a divine source.

The historical theme of all the festivals teaches us "that in awakening in the nations the power of historical consciousness, [the Jews] have assumed the responsibility of directing that power into channels of peace and good will" (Kaplan, *The Meaning of God in Modern Jewish Religion*, p. 192). Basing the festivals on historical events gives man a sense of history, and "through his sense of history, man enlarges his field of operation far beyond the range of the three generations of time with which life is usually contemporaneous" (*ibid.*, p. 189).

The Pilgrimage Festivals all center around the early history of our people. To understand a man's personality, psychiatrists probe his mind to learn of his earliest experiences. The experiences of infancy and childhood have a decisive influence on the entire development of a human being. This is true of a nation as well. Our destiny has been shaped by our historical experience.

But Pesach does not focus on the exodus simply as a historical event that took place long ago. In the Haggadah we recite: "One must look upon himself as if he himself had come out of Egypt, personally" (quoted from M. Pes. 10:5). The exodus is contemporary for every generation of Jews. Jefferson said: "Eternal vigilance is the price of freedom." Pesach provides that eternal vigilance for the Jewish people.

When Moses first approached Pharaoh regarding the liberation of the Jewish people, the king of Egypt asked: "who is this God that I should obey Him and free Israel?" (Exod. 5:2). Pharaoh knew of no god who redeems the oppressed. Professor Kaplan has written: "The conception of God as the redeemer of the oppressed has revolutionized the meaning and function of religion, and has placed it at the service of the ethical impulses" (Kaplan, *The Meaning of God*, p. 268). In the words of a contemporary theologian: "What makes the exodus from Egypt the pattern of redemption for all Mankind is the interpretation of the prophet who sees God as a redeemer from tyranny; the God of Israel makes history the place where man progresses to freedom" (Maybaum, *The Face of God after Auschwitz*, p. 177).

Kabbalists have understood freedom as the emancipation from the powers of evil and the realm of Satan, who lies in wait for man and tries to enslave him morally. Translated into modern categories of thought, this means moral responsibility as against subjugation to passion, impulse, and instinct. Thus Rabbi Kook writes: "The difference between a slave and a free man is not only a difference in status; that is, that by a matter of chance one person is subject to another person, and another person is not. We can find a wise bondman whose spirit is filled with freedom, and a free man who has the spirit of a slave. Authentic freedom is the exalted spirit to which a man and a people as a whole are elevated so that one is faithful to his inner self, to the image of God that is within him" ('Olat Re'iyah, 2:245).

These ideas are not left in the abstract but are expressed in the many observances that cluster around Pesach.

2. The Four Parashiyot

In the six weeks preceding Pesach during the months of Adar and Nisan, there occur four special Sabbaths called Sheqalim, Zakhor, Parah, and Shabbat Hahodesh. In addition, the Sabbath immediately preceding Pesach is called Shabbat Hagadol. The first four are referred to as the 'Arba Parashiyot and are distinguished by additional readings from the Torah and special lessons from the prophets. Two of these are connected with

the celebration of Passover (M. Meg. 3:4). (A good summary of the 'Arba Parashiyot can be found in the Mishnah Berurah on O.H. 681:1, n. 1.)

Shabbat Sheqalim

In ancient days, every male Israelite twenty years and older had to contribute a half-shekel annually to the maintenance of the Temple in Jerusalem. This had to be paid before the first of Nisan. In order to remind the people of this duty, proclamations were made on the first of Adar that the half-shekel was due (M. Sheq. 1:1). Inasmuch as Jews came to the synagogue on the Sabbath, it was instituted that on the Sabbath preceding the first of Adar, the Torah reading would include the passage describing the first proclamation of the half-shekel. On that Sabbath two Torah scrolls are removed from the ark. In one we read the portion of the week, and in the other Exodus 30:11-16, which contains this passage (O.H. 685:1). If the first day of Adar occurs on a Sabbath, three Torah scrolls are used: the first for the portion of the week, the second for the section for Rosh Hodesh (Num. 29:9-15), and the third for the section for Sheqalim (O.H. 685:1). Hatzi Qaddish is recited on the Sabbaths of the four parashiyot upon completion of the reading from the scroll prior to the one from which the Maftir is read. The Haftarah is from 11 Kings 12:1-17, which is an account of the gifts contributed for the repair of the Temple in the reign of King Jehoash. This Haftarah is recited even if Shabbat Sheqalim falls on Rosh Hodesh (O.H. 685:1).

In a leap year Shabbat Sheqalim occurs on the Sabbath before Adar II, or on Rosh Hodesh Adar II if it occurs on the Sabbath.

Shabbat Zakhor

The Sabbath preceding Purim is called Shabbat Zakhor. Again two Torah scrolls are used. In the first the portion of the week is read, and in the second, Deuteronomy 25:17-19, which tells of the battle with Amalek. This portion begins with the word zakhor-hence the name of the Sabbath. The Haftarah is from I Samuel 15:1-34, which also tells of a battle with the Amalekites. This material is associated with Purim because of a tradition that Haman was a descendant of the Amalekites since he was called an Agagite, and Agag was king of the Amalekites in the time of Samuel (I Sam. 15:8).

Shabbat Parah

The third of the four Sabbaths is Shabbat Parah. This must always precede the last of the four Sabbaths, Shabbat Hahodesh. Thus if Rosh Hodesh Nisan falls on a Sabbath and it also becomes Shabbat Habodesh, Shabbat Parah falls on the last Sabbath of Adar (O.H. 685:3-4). If Rosh Hodesh Nisan is in the middle of the week, Shabbat Habodesh falls on the last Sabbath of the month of Adar and Shabbat Parah precedes it (O.H. 685:5).

Again two Torah scrolls are used. From the first we read the portion of the week, and from the second, the laws concerning the red heifer (parah adumah) in Numbers 19:1-22. The Haftarah deals with the future purification of Israel as described in the Book of Ezekiel (36:16-38).

All Israelites came to the Temple in Jerusalem on Pesach in order to offer the Paschal lamb. They had to be in a state of ritual purity to perform this rite. Since the ashes of the red heifer were used in the process of purification, this passage served to remind those who were not in a state of purity to take the necessary steps.

Shabbat Hahodesh

The Sabbath before the month of Nisan, or the first of Nisan if it is a Saturday, is Shabbat Hahodesh. Again two Torah scrolls are used. In the first we read the portion of the week, and in the second, Exodus 12:1-20. If Rosh Hodesh Nisan is on Sabbath, three Torah scrolls are used. In the first we read the portion of the week, in the second, the portion for Rosh Hodesh (Num. 28:9-15), and in the third, that of Shabbat Hahodesh. Qaddish is said after the reading of the second scroll. The Haftarah is Ezekiel 45: 16--46:18, which contains a description of the sacrifices to be brought on the first of Nisan, Pesach, and other festivals in the future Temple. This Sabbath celebrates the arrival of the month of Nisan, during which the liberation of the children of Israel took place.

3. Shabbat Hagadol

In addition to these four Sabbaths, the Sabbath immediately preceding Pesach is called Shabbat Hagadol (O.H. 430:1). It received the title "great" because of the importance of the approaching festival. In the opinion of at least one scholar, the Sabbath before each of the festivals was originally called Shabbat Hagadol because of the instruction sought and given respecting the observances of the coming festival (Zunz, Ritus, p. 10). The name has been preserved only in the case of the Sabbath before Pesach possibly because in this case the questions were more numerous.

Other explanations have been given. According to tradition, the tenth of Nisan in the year of the exodus was on a Saturday; it was considered a great event, in fact a miracle, that the Israelites could on that day select a lamb for sacrifice without being molested by their Egyptian masters, who, at other times, would have stoned them for such daring (Exod. 8:22; O.H. 430:1 in M.A.). Another possible reason for the name is that the Haftarah speaks of the "great day" of the Lord on which Messiah will appear (Mal. 3:4-24).

A most cogent and yet novel explanation is that the people used to return from the synagogue later than usual on this Sabbath because of the unusually long discourse that was customary on this day. Thus this Sabbath seemed "great," i.e., longer than the other Sabbaths (Shibolei Haleqet, sec. 205).

There is no change in the service or the Torah reading on this Sabbath. According to some customs we are to recite part of the Haggadah, from 'Avadim hayinu to lekhaber 'al kol 'avonoteinu, instead of Psalm 104, normally recited on Sabbath afternoons in the winter (Rama on O.H. 430:1).

Unit VIII:
Pesach (II)

VIII. Pesach (II)

10. The Seder

The scriptural exhortation to tell the story of the exodus to our children (Exod. 13:8) is interpreted as a positive commandment to retell the story each year (Lauterbach, *Mekhilta, Mesekhta D'pisha*, 1:17, p. 149; Maimonides, *Sefer Hamitswot*, mitswah 157). Hence we have the Seder.

"The Passover celebration commemorates an event which will probably symbolize for all time the essential meaning of freedom--namely freedom directed to a purpose. When Israel came forth from bondage, it was not simply to enjoy liberty but to make liberty an instrument of service" (Finkelstein, *The Haggadah*, p. i).

"Because Jewish tradition holds that God must be worshipped not only through prayer, but in equal degree, through study and learning, the Passover celebration is arranged primarily as a lesson, in which are mingled Jewish history, literature and religion" (*ibid.*, p. iii). Hence the Haggadah is "an anthology of Jewish literature in almost every one of its multifarious aspects, composed in many ages and under many skies, and moulded by long centuries of usage into an harmonious whole" (Roth, *The Haggadah*, p. v). The name Haggadah, which means "telling," is derived from "And thou shalt tell thy son" (Exod. 13:8).

Preliminaries

Whereas the rabbis normally discouraged displays of affluence, in the case of the Seder they urged that the table should be set lavishly with the finest silver and dishes at one's disposal (O.H. 472:2; *ibid.* in Shneur Zalman of Lyady, *Shulhan 'Arukh*). In many families it is customary for the chief celebrant to wear a white robe known as a Kittel (sargenes among German and Alsatian Jews). Many reasons have been given for this practice.

The Kittel is a festive garment that was worn in ancient times at all joyous celebrations. The High Priest wore white garments when officiating in the Temple of Jerusalem (Lev. 16:4), and wearing the Kittel gives the Seder the status of a sacred service in the Temple. According to the kabbalists, white symbolizes the divine attributes of lovingkindness and mercy, *chesed v'rachamim*, and thus reminds us that the Holy One showed lovingkindness and mercy to our ancestors in Egypt since not all of them were deserving of redemption. We should exhibit the same mercy and lovingkindness toward our fellow men. Hence the special emphasis on inviting guests who are in modest circumstances to the Seder (Wahrman, *Hagei Yisra'el Umo'adaw*, pp. 147 f.).

A strange interpretation of the practice maintains that the Kittel resembles a shroud and is donned as a precaution lest the celebration turn to revelry (O.H. 472 in M.D. 3).

Dr. Finkestein has suggested that the Kittel was an adaptation of the festive garment of Jerusalem in the days of the Second Temple. As a matter of fact, many of the practices connected with the Seder derive from the life of the Jews of that period, such as eating an egg and parsley, washing the hands before touching any food, and the reclining posture which becomes free men (copied from the Persians) (Finkelstein, *The Haggadah*, p. iv).

The Seder Plate

The Seder Plate, containing three matsot, bitter herbs, Haroset, parsley or another vegetable, and two dishes--usually a shankbone and a roasted egg, is placed before the one who conducts the Seder (O.H. 473:4).

In accordance with the principle that one should not pass over a mitswah when he meets it), the foods on the Seder Plate are so arranged that the first one to be used is nearest to the leader of the Seder, the next one next, and so on (Rama on O.H. 473:4). Hence the arrangement is as follows:

1. Top right, the Zero'a (shankbone)
2. Top left, the egg
3. Center, Maror (bitter herbs)
4. Lower right, Haroset
5. Lower left, Karpas (parsley)

All the printed Haggadahs have fifteen words which trace the sequence of the Seder service. These are written in rhyme and were devised as a mnemonic. Abudraham quotes a variety of other mnemonic verses. The one in our printed editions has been attributed to Rashi (*Kasher, Haggadah Shelemah*, p. 77). It is as follows: Kadesh, Orchtz, Karpas, Yachatz, Magid, Rachsa, Motzi Matzah, Marror, Korech, Shulchan Orech, Saphun Barech, Hallel Nertzza. We shall explain each term and the laws connected with it.

Kadesh: As with all festival meals, the Seder begins with Qiddush. It consists of three benedictions: one over wine, the second over the festival, and the shehechianu. On the Sabbath we begin with v'ychulu and add the appropriate references to the Sabbath. On Saturday night, before shehechianu, we insert a special Havdalah that consists of two benedictions boreh M'oire ha'esh." and the regular Havdalah but with the variation necessitated by the festival. Here the separation is not between the holy and the profane but between the holy of a higher degree and the holy of a lesser degree. (O.H. 473:1)

Four Cups of Wine

The cup of wine used for Qiddush also counts as the first of the four cups ordained for Pesach. (O.H. 472:8, 13, 14).

Many explanations have been given for the four cups of wine. They are said to be symbolic of the four synonymous expressions for redemption used by Scripture (Exod. 6:6-7), or of the four monarchies which are to precede the final redemption (Dan. 7), or of the four figurative cups of punishment which the empire of godlessness is to drain before the event, while the four cups of comfort are administered to Israel (M. Pes. 10:1).

A modern commentator has proposed a more simple reason for the four cups. Every Sabbath and festival we have two cups of wine at the meal, one for Qiddush and one for Birkat Hamazon. Since the Haggadah has two more benedictions, one concluding the first part of the Haggadah and one concluding the second part, two more cups were added, the second for the former, and the fourth for the latter (Knebel, Haggadah shel Pesach, p. 24).

The Cup of Elijah

The question arose whether a fifth cup of wine should be drunk at the Seder, after Hallel Gadol (Ps. 136), corresponding to the fifth scriptural expression of redemption, vahevete (Exod. 6:8). Since the question remains unresolved, we pour a fifth cup but do not drink it. We call this the cup of the Prophet Elijah because when Elijah reappears to herald the coming of the Messiah, he will rule on all unanswered halakhic questions (including the question of whether a fifth cup is required). Our custom thus has been to have four cups (O.H. 481:1, but see Maimonides, Hil. Hamets Umatsah 8:10, and Rama, O.H. 481:1, who rule that the fifth is optional).

At least one modern Haggadah suggests that, following the ruling of Maimonides making the fifth cup optional, we should adopt it as our practice in gratitude for the reestablishment of the State of Israel (Silverman, Haggadah, p. 66). (For an extensive discussion of the fifth cup, see Kasher, Haggadah Shelemah, pp. 94-95.)

A person who never drinks wine, either because it is harmful to him or because he does not like it, should make a special effort on Pesach to drink from each of the four cups (O.H. 472:10).

Even children, when they have reached the age of being trained in the performance of religious commandments, should have a small cup of wine before them (O.H. 472:15).

Reclining

In ancient times laborers and slaves ate hurriedly, squatting on the ground. The well-to-do, on the other hand, reclined on cushions alongside the table. On the night of Pesach, when there is no distinction between rich and poor, we all recline at the table in the manner of free men.

Customs change, however, and the ancient triclinium (dining couch) has long since passed out of use. Thus, when we recline at the Seder table, harking back to the practice of the Jews in Palestine at the time of the Second Temple, we do not use a triclinium but sit propped up on cushions. The celebrant leans to his left when drinking the wine or eating the food (see Roth, Haggadah, p. xi et al.). Hence, when he sits down after reciting the Qiddush, the celebrant should drink the first cup of wine while reclining to the left (O.H. 472:2-3).

Orchtz - Immediately after Qiddush the hands are washed. This washing is necessary because we are obliged to wash our hands before touching anything that is dipped in liquid (B. Pes. 115a; Tur, O.H. 473), and the next item in the sequence of the Seder service is the dipping of a vegetable (O.H. 473:6). Since this is not the regular statutory washing before meals, the benediction on washing the hands is omitted (see Tosafot, B. Pes. 115a, s.v. kol).

Opinions vary as to whether this washing of the hands is obligatory for all the participants or only for the leader of the Seder. Since the reason for the washing obviously applies to all the participants, all should wash (see Abudraham Hashalem, p. 219). Most current Haggadahs, however, speak only of the celebrant washing his hands (see Yosef Omets 763 and Leqet Yosher, p. 88). One scholar has proposed that this is either based on an error (i.e., since the instructions in most Haggadahs are given in the singular, they were interpreted as referring only to the celebrant), or that it is sufficient if the leader alone performs the washing since the practice is only the vestige of an ancient custom (see Goldschmidt, Die Pessach-Haggada, p. 20, n. 1; see also Kasher's comments in Haggadah Shelemah, pp. 96-97).

Karpas - A piece of parsley or some other vegetable is given to each person at the table and dipped in salt water. It is eaten after the recitation of a benediction. This practice is meant to arouse the curiosity of the children (Tur, O.H. 473).

Historically, the dipping of the vegetable goes back to the fashion of eating meals a few thousand years ago. The meal began with an hors d'oeuvre, or dish of a slightly pungent flavor, steeped in some liquid of a similar nature. This ultimately became identified with the bunch of hyssop which was dipped in the blood of the first Paschal sacrifice at the time of the exodus and used for marking the doorways of the houses of the children of Israel as a sign to the angel of death (Roth, Haggadah, p. 8).

Yachatz - The leader takes the middle matsah and breaks it into two pieces. One portion is left where it is. The larger portion is wrapped in a cloth and hidden somewhere in the room--generally under the tablecloth or between the celebrant's cushions (O.H. 473:6 and in B.H. 19). The breaking of the matsah represents the bread of affliction--i.e., of the poor man who eats crumbs rather than whole loaves (B. Pes. 115b-116a).

We use three matsot at the Seder because on Sabbaths and festivals it is customary to have two loaves of hallah on the table in recollection of the double share of manna which fell in the wilderness on the sixth day (Exod. 16:22; B. Shab. 117b). Since one of the matsot is broken in two at the beginning of the Seder, there must be three matsot at the outset so that two whole ones will remain for the meal (Seder Rav 'Amram, ed. Goldschmidt, p. 113).

The custom of hiding the Afiqoman and rewarding the child who finds it is intended to keep the children interested until the end of the Seder (Wahrman, .Hagei Yisra'el Umo'adaw, p. 144).

Magid - The story of the exodus is recited. As mentioned above, the telling of the story is one of the commandments connected with the observance of Pesach, hence the Haggadah.

The Haggadah as a whole has two main divisions. The first contains most of the ceremonies, and the recital of historical and expository passages explaining the reason for the Seder celebration. The second part comes after the meal. The passages recited here are hymnal and glorificatory, also expressing our hopes for deliverance.

The first part, which begins after Qiddush and the few preliminary rituals, is referred to as Magid. It comprises the following sections.

Lifting the plate and reciting the introductory passage, ha lachma.

The display of the plate, and particularly of the matsah, occasions the child's questions ma nishtana after the qe'arah (plate) has been put down and the cups filled.

The answers follow, with illustrations of the duty to recount the story of the exodus, the description of the four sons, and the exposition of Joshua 24:2-4 and Deuteronomy 26:5-8, leading to an elaboration of the ten plagues. Then follow psalms of thanksgiving and the prelude to the meal with its attendant ceremonies.

Usually it is the youngest son who asks the four questions. In ancient times the questions were spontaneous, and the child had to be prepared in advance if he was not alert enough to ask questions on his own. Later the questions became set with a permanent text which the children had to learn. If the children cannot ask the questions, or if there are no children, the wife may ask them, or another adult, or the celebrant himself reads the questions (B. Pes. l l6a; O.H. 473:7).

It is customary to spill a bit of wine from the cup at the mention of each of the ten plagues. This is also done when the mnemonic of the plagues is said. This practice probably originated in an ancient belief that in so doing we ward off evil--nolo me tangere (Roth, Haggadah, p. 27). Some explain that since the wine is usually spilled by

dipping a finger into the cup, the practice refers to the verse "This is the finger of God" (Exod. 8:15). A more rationalistic explanation is given by Don Isaac Abarbanel. The spilling of the wine is a sign that our cup of joy is not full since our deliverance involved the punishment of others; our joy is made incomplete by the fact that the Egyptians suffered so that we might be liberated.

Before the conclusion of the first part of the Haggadah, marked by the drinking of the second cup of wine, the first two paragraphs of Hallel are recited, as they were during the sacrifice of the Paschal lamb (M. Pes. 9:3, 10:6, 7). The usual blessing is omitted (Tur, O.H. 473 in Bet Yosef). The blessing is recited only when all of Hallel is recited without interruption, or when Hallel is recited by day (see Kasher, Haggadah Shelemah, pp. 139 f.).

The first part of the Haggadah ends with the second cup of wine, which is preceded by the blessing on wine (O.H. 474:1 in Rama).

Rachsa - As before every meal, each participant washes his hands and recites the blessing *al ntealat yadaim* (O.H. 475:1).

Motzi Matzah - After the washing of the hands, the leader takes the matsot from the Seder plate and recites two blessings, the usual *hamotzi* and the special blessing for matsah, *achilat matsah*, and then distributes a piece of the uppermost matsah and a piece of the broken middle matsah to each participant; these are eaten while reclining to the left (O.H. 475:1). When a large group is present, the participants can use other matsot. The eating of matsah is an obligation only at the Seder, and is optional during the rest of Pesach. The requirement of abstaining from leaven applies to all of Pesach (O.H. 475:7; M. Pes. 10:5).

Marror - The participants take a piece of bitter herb, usually horseradish root, dip it into the Haroset to reduce its sharpness, and eat it after reciting the blessing *al achilat marror* (O.H. 475:1).

Korech - The leader breaks the bottom matsah into smaller pieces and makes sandwiches of bitter herbs between two pieces of matsah. These are eaten after reciting *zecher l'mkdash k'hallel* while reclining on the left (O.H. 475:1). Customs vary as to whether Haroset is used here again (*ibid.* in Rama).

The eating of bitter herbs is a biblical commandment (Exod. 12:8; Num. 9:11). It is a symbol of the bitter servitude our ancestors experienced as slaves in Egypt (M. Pes. 10:5).

The Haroset, which lessens the sharpness of the Maror, is a compound of apples, almonds, raisins, and spices, chopped very fine into a paste with the addition of some wine. Its admixture with the Maror, dulling the sharpness of the bitter herbs, may be

taken as symbolic of God's loving-kindness, which dulled the bitterness of the Egyptian bondage. The color and general composition of the Haroset remind us of the mortar which the Hebrew slaves used while working on the building projects assigned by their taskmasters.

The principal ingredient of the Haroset, the apple, recalls an ancient legend regarding Pharaoh's heartless sentence against the male Hebrew children. Jewish mothers, fearing for the lives of their infants if they were boys, used to give birth in the secrecy of orchards, unseen by human eyes, and there, we are told, angels came down from heaven to help them. The source of this explanation is a midrashic comment on the verse in the Song of Songs: "I raised thee up under the apple tree; there thy mother brought thee forth" (Song of Songs 8:5; Exodus Rabbah 1:16; Rama on O.H. 473:5). The other ingredients of the Haroset are also fruits to which the people of Israel have been compared (O.H. 473:5 in Rama; detailed explanation in Qitsur Shulchan 'Arukh 118:4; Roth, Haggadah, p. ix; see also B. Pes. 116a in Tosafot, s.v.).

Shulchan Orach - The meal is an integral part of the Seder service. The heart of the service in ancient times was the eating of the Paschal lamb, which had to be consumed within the confines of Jerusalem and in a state of ritual purity. Nowadays the table becomes an altar, and eating performed in the right spirit becomes an act of worship.

A spirit of reverence, therefore, should pervade the meal. Immoderate eating or drinking would be blasphemy (O.H. 476:1 in Rama), and loose language should be avoided. By such measures the commonplace is sanctified, becoming an act of divine service (Roth, Haggadah, p. 44).

It is customary to start the Seder meal with a hard-boiled egg dipped in salt water. Classical scholars, recollecting the traditional description of a Roman meal (*ab ovo usque ad mala*), consider the egg to be no more than a relic of the customary hors d'oeuvres of the typical meal of ancient times (Finkelstein, Haggadah, p. ix; Roth, Haggadah, p. ix; Wahrman, .Hagei Yisra'el Umo'adaw, p. 147). It has been pointed out, however, that popular lore throughout the world generally associates eggs with the spring season.

While the egg may be a relic of an ancient custom, it can be given a fresh symbolic value (Roth, Haggadah, p. ix). Various explanations in this vein have been offered. Eggs are a symbol of mourning (round things are generally eaten in a house of mourning), and thus the egg at the Seder is said to be a gesture of mourning for the destruction of Jerusalem, added in place of the special festival offering, which can no longer be offered. This interpretation is emphasized by the fact that the ninth of Av always falls on the same day of the week as the first night of Pesach. (O.H. 476:2). Hence the salt water at the Seder symbolizes the tears we shed over the destruction of the Temple (Wahrman, Hagei Yisra'el Umo'adaw, p. 147).

Rabbi Moses Sofer (the "Hatam Sofer") offered a more fanciful interpretation. In general, the more a food is cooked, the softer it becomes. With the egg, however, the opposite is the case. This is symbolic of the people of Israel. The more they are oppressed by the nations of the world, the harder they become in their determination not to yield and to remain faithful to the covenant.

The rest of the Seder meal follows the custom of the land regarding festive meals. In certain places, however, roasted meat is forbidden at the Seder because the Paschal lamb was roasted, and roasted meat might be construed as being a Paschal sacrifice, which is forbidden today. In some other places, there is no restriction on roasted meat but an entire lamb may not be roasted, since it would be too similar to the Paschal lamb (O.H. 476:1).

Saphun - After the meal, the half-matsah that was put aside early in the evening is distributed to the participants, each of whom eats a piece to conclude the meal. This is the Afiqoman. The word afiqoman has been given various interpretations. The most logical is that it is the Greek word for "dessert" (Roth, Haggadah, p. 44). For us the Afiqoman represents the Paschal lamb, which was traditionally the last thing to be eaten at the Seder so that its taste and recollection would remain uppermost. Therefore nothing is eaten after partaking of the Afiqoman (O.H. 478: 1). Some Sefardic rites preface the eating of the Afiqoman with the words *zecher l'karban pesach hanechal al hasava* ("in remembrance of the Paschal lamb which is eaten when one is sated") (Goldschmidt, Haggada, p. 71). There is a difference of opinion about drinking after the Afiqoman. Some authorities only permit the drinking of water--with the exception, of course, of the last two of the four statutory cups of wine (O.H. 478:1 in Mishnah Berurah). Others forbid fermented beverages, since drinking these may lead to intoxication (O.H. 478:1 in B.H.).

Barech - The third cup of wine is filled and Birkat Hamazon is recited. It is the usual Grace after meals with the addition of *yaleh v'yavo* and the *harachaman* for the festival, with *r'tze* on a Sabbath; the cup of wine, which is generally optional, is obligatory at this service (O.H. 479:1).

Hallel - After the Birkhat Hamazon and the drinking of the third cup, the fourth cup is filled and the rest of Hallel is recited (O.H. 480:1). During the Middle Ages *shefoch chamatcha*, consisting of verses from Psalms 79:6 and 69:25 and Lamentations 3:66, was inserted before the Hallel (Wahrman, *Hagei Yisra'el Umo'adaw*, p. 149). The old Haggadahs do not have it (see Seder Rav 'Amram, ed. Goldschmidt; Maimonides, *Mahzor Vitry*, ed. Hurwitz, p. 282). These imprecations seem vengeful and vindictive to us, and unworthy of a festival which includes a number of rituals showing compassion even for the Egyptians. The fact that they date from the Middle Ages, when persecutions of the Jews had become common, explains the mood (see Abudraham Hashalem 234).

It is customary to pour an extra glass of wine, known as Elijah's cup, and keep the door open during the recitation of shefoch chmtcha. This is a symbolic act which shows that we are not afraid, despite the oppressive cruelty we face, and that our faith in the final redemption and the final triumph of righteousness is unshaken (O.H. 481:1 in Rama, B.H. 3). It has been suggested that originally the door was open throughout the entire Seder. During the Middle Ages, when it was dangerous to do so, the door was kept closed, but it was opened just for this passage (see Wahrman, Hagei Yisra'el Umo'adaw, p. 149). In Jewish lore, Elijah the prophet has become the harbinger of the coming of the Redeemer. We call this cup the cup of Elijah to reaffirm our faith in his coming to announce the final redemption (ibid., and Yosef Omets 788; also, see above p. 123). A commendable effort has been made to use this passage as an occasion for the memorialization of the six million martyrs who perished at the hands of the Nazis and for the heroes of the ghetto uprisings. When recited in relation to these tragic events, the words no longer seem unduly vindictive.

After this, Hallel is continued. The customary final benediction, Melech M'hulal b'tesbachot, is omitted because the later benediction al melech gadol b'tsbatchot, serves as the closing benediction for the entire section (see B. Pes. 118a in Tosafot, and in Abudraham Hashalem, p. 236; O.H. 480:1 in B.H. 3).

The Haggadah divides Hallel into two sections because the first part of Hallel, which mentions the exodus, fits the mood of the Haggadah passages preceding the meal, all of which are variations on the same theme, while the second part of Hallel is hymnal and thus fits the songs of praise which are the substance of the second part of the Haggadah (Kasher, Haggadah Shelemah, pp. 140 f.; Abudraham Hashalem, p. 236).

After Hallel we recite Hallel Gadol (Ps. 136) and Birkat Hashir (B. Pes. 118a), which we call Nishmat (O.H. 480:1 in Rama, B.H. 3), ending with the benediction melech el chai haolamim. After this the fourth cup is drunk and the Berakhah Aharonah is recited.

Nertza - marks the end of the Seder with an appropriate hymn—chasal sedor Pesach and shanah habaah b'yerushalim. Some hymns have been added at the end of the service. We recite euvchen v'yhe bchatzi halaylah of Yannai on the first night and euvchen v'amrtem zevach pesach on the second night. In addition there are three other playful songs. Though the commentators have read profound meanings into these songs, they were simply intended as a means of holding the attention of the children until the very end.

The rest of the evening should be spent in serious discussion or in study consonant with the spirit of the celebration (O.H. 481:2).

With the exception of the slight variation mentioned above, the Seder on the second night of Pesach is celebrated exactly as on the first night (O.H. 481:2 in Rama).

Unit IX:

Pesach (III)

The Morning Service

The Counting of the 'Omer

The Second Day

The Intermediate Days

The Concluding Days of Pesach

IX: Pesach (II)

15: The Concluding Days of Pesach

The seventh and eighth days of Pesach (in Israel the seventh day) equal the first days in sanctity, and the same regulations apply to them.

The services are exactly the same as during the first days, except that the shortened version of Hallel is recited during the morning services, each day has its own specially assigned reading from the Torah and the Prophets, and memorial services for the deceased are recited on the last day. The shechenu is omitted from the candle lighting and evening Qiddush.

The shortened form of the Hallel is recited for the following reason. According to tradition, the children of Israel crossed the Red Sea on the seventh day of Pesach. When the ministering angels saw the hosts of Pharaoh drown, they wished to sing praises unto God. God rebuked them, saying: "Shall ye sing praises unto me while my creatures are drowning?" (B. Meg. 10b). Hence we shorten the hymns of praise on this occasion. Another suggested reason is that normally the complete Hallel is recited only at the beginning of the festival, as is done on Pesach. Only when the succeeding days have some theme peculiar to themselves do we say the complete Hallel on those days as well. During Sukkot each day saw a different number of sacrifices offered in the Temple, and on each night of Hanukkah a different number of candles is lit, giving each day a significance of its own. The complete Hallel is therefore recited on each of these days (B. Arak. 10a-b).

The Torah reading on the seventh day is Exodus 13:17-15:26, telling of the crossing of the Red Sea, which took place on the seventh day, and the song that Moses and the children of Israel sang when they were saved. The Maftir is the same as the reading from the second scroll on the Intermediate Days. The Haftarah is II Samuel 22:1-51, also a song of deliverance.

On the eighth day the reading is Deuteronomy 15:19-16:17. On a Sabbath the reading starts with 14:22. The Maftir is the same as the day before. The Haftarah is Isaiah 10:32-12:6, which speaks of the future deliverance of the children of Israel.

The Memorial Services follow the reading of the Torah and the Haftarah. The present-day practice is to have Hazkarat Neshamot at the end of each festival, i.e., the eighth day of Pesach, the second day of Shavu'ot, the eighth day of Sukkot, and on Yom Kippur, which, because it is connected to Rosh Hashanah by the Ten Days of Penitence, is considered to be like the last day of a festival.

The custom of remembering the dead in the synagogue is an old one and is based on the belief that such prayers are of help to the dead (Midrash Tanhuma, Ha'azinu 20:8; Pesiqta Rabbati 20). This was done individually by people when they were called up to the Torah and pledged a gift for charity (O.H. 284:7 in Rama). In some synagogues this is still the practice, in other synagogues a memorial prayer is recited after the Torah reading, or on the Sabbath at Minhah after the Torah reading when the names of all those whose Yahrzeit will be held during the coming week are mentioned in a memorial prayer, *el maleh rachamim*.

A collective memorial prayer with the entire congregation joining in originally took place only on Yom Kippur. It was recited not only for the dead (O. H. 621:6) but also to put the living into a contrite mood (Kol Bo 70). Among German Jews this custom is still maintained (Me'ir Netiv, p. 144; see also Siddur Rashi, ed. Buber, par. 214).

Those whose parents are living customarily leave the place of worship during the yizkor service. Many reasons have been given for this practice: lest we arouse the jealousy of those whose parents are dead; to prevent those who do not have to say yizkor from falling into the error of saying it by mistake, thus tempting fate; lest we be in the awkward position of remaining silent when those around us are worshipping. Obviously some of the above are superstitions, but the custom has nevertheless persisted.

Among the Sefardim no one leaves the service during yizkor. Many Conservative synagogues have adopted the Sefardic custom (see Eliyahu Kitov, *Sefer Hatoda'ah* 1:56).

That the yizkor service has such wide appeal in our day is to be welcomed, for it helps to bind the generations together in filial piety. Death does not end or break this bond. The virtues of the fathers work to mitigate some of the faults of the children, and the virtues of the children work to remove some of the imperfections of the fathers. "Moreover, to pray for the dead is not an unjustifiable corollary of the belief in God's boundless mercy. Unless we are prepared to maintain that at his death the fate of man is fixed irretrievably and forever, that therefore the sinner who rejected much of God's love during a brief lifetime has lost all of it eternally, prayer for the peace and salvation of the departed soul commends itself as of the highest religious obligations" (Singer, *Lectures and Addresses*, p. 72, quoted in Abrahams, *Companion to the Authorised Daily Prayer Book*, pp. ccxxi f.).

The rest of the service is exactly as on the seventh day. The same is true of Minhah. The Ma'ariv service is a weekday service, with *ata chonantanu* inserted in the fourth benediction.

The festival is concluded with Havdalah on wine, both at the synagogue and at home, as at the end of the first two days. On a Sabbath the benedictions for fire and spices are added.

Unit X

Sefirah and Shavu'ot

Sefirah

Shavu'ot

X. Sefirah and Shavu'ot

1. Sefirah

The period between Pesach and Shavu'ot is called Sefirah ("counting"). The name is derived from the practice of counting the 'Omer, which is observed from the night of the second Seder of Pesach until the eve of Shavu'ot.

The Sefirah period is a time of sadness. According to the Talmud, this is because twelve thousand of Rabbi Akiva's disciples died one year between Pesach and Shavu'ot (B. Yeb. 62b; Otsar Hage'onim Yebamot, p. 141). The rabbis explain that this massacre took place because the disciples did not respect each other. Historians connect the event with the Hadrianic persecution, which followed the Bar Kokhba revolt in which Rabbi Akiva was involved (Wahrman, Hagei Yisra'el Umo'adaw, p. 166).

Some associate the somberness of these days with an even earlier period of Jewish history. The fruits of the field ripen during the time encompassed by Sefirah, and it is, therefore, a period of uncertainty -- of hope and prayer that our physical sustenance will be continued in abundance (Abudraham Hashalem, p. 241; B. R. H. 16a). A contemporary scholar has suggested that this uncertainty was due, in particular, to the fact that in Israel, the hot winds that are so harmful to the crops blow between Pesach and Shavu'ot (Wahrman, Hagei Yisra'el Umo'adaw, p. 171).

The 'Omer could no longer be brought to the Temple of Jerusalem after the destruction. The counting was continued, however, as a zekher lemikdash (remembrance of the Temple) -- hence another reason for sadness (B. Men. 66a; Kol Bo, chap. 55; Maimonides, Hil. Sefirat Ha'omer). It was easy to superimpose other sorrowful memories on such a period, and the Hadrianic persecution was the most prominent of these.

The Crusades added another reason for sorrow, especially for the Jews of Germany, since the massacres perpetrated by the Crusaders also took place at this time of the year (O.H. 493:2 in M.D. 2).

Another reason for sadness was added in modern times. While the crematoria and gas chambers of the Nazis operated all year round, some notable tragic events took place in the Sefirah period. The Parliament of Israel fixed the twenty-seventh of Nisan as Memorial Day for those slaughtered by the Nazis during World War II. In addition, the day before Israel Independence Day is called Yom Hazikaron for those who died in the War of Liberation. The last great deportation to the gas chambers, that of the Jews of Hungary, took place during the Sefirah period

These sad events are memorialized by our refraining from participation in joyous events during this period. No weddings should take place, and it is customary not to have the hair cut (O.H. 493:2). No event involving music and dancing should be scheduled during Sefirah (O.H. 493:1 in M.A. 1).

The one interruption in this doleful period is Lag Ba'Omer the thirty-third day of the counting of the 'Omer, which falls on the eighteenth of Iyar. Evidently on this day there was an interruption in the oppression and hence the requirements of Sefirah were waived.

There are numerous variations in the customs prevailing during this period (O.H. 493:3). Some observe mourning up to Shavu'ot, excluding Lag Ba'Omer only (O.H. 493 in M.D. 2; *ibid.* in Sha'arei Teshuvah 8); some observe mourning only until Lag Ba'Omer (O.H. 493:1 in Rama); others start the period of sadness on the first day of Iyar (O.H. 493:3) and count until Shavu'ot, with the exception of Lag Ba'Omer; and still others begin on the first day of Iyar and continue until three days before Shavu'ot (Hayyei Adam 130:11).

In Ashkenazic communities, the most widespread custom has been to observe mourning from Pesach until the three days before Shavu'ot. Exceptions are made on Rosh Hodesh Iyar, Rosh Hodesh Sivan, and Lag Ba'Omer (see in Mishnah Berurah, O.H. 493:15). Some add the fifth of Iyar, which is Israel Independence Day.

The Committee on Jewish Law and Standards of the Rabbinical Assembly, in 1949, adopted the Geonic tradition with the following statement:

"According to Geonic tradition, marriages in the Sefirah days were forbidden only from the second day of Passover until Lag B'Omer, and not from Lag B'Omer on (Otsar Hageonim, Yebamot 140).

"This tradition was also practiced in the Medieval period in the Jewish communities of France.

"The prohibition against marriages during these thirty-three days applied only to wedding ceremonies accompanied by dancing, singing and music.

"We therefore recommend that the Geonic tradition concerning marriages during Sefirah be followed, and that the prohibition be observed from the second day of Pesach until Lag B'Omer. During this period, marriages not accompanied by dancing, singing and music may be performed.

"On those days, during the thirty-three day period, when Tahanun is not recited in the synagogue, as well as on the fifth day of Iyar (Israel Independence Day), marriages of a public and festive nature may be solemnized."

A later decision of the Law Committee shortened the period even more and introduced a new element. On the one hand, the whole basis for the restrictions during the Sefirah period rests on shaky grounds. On the other hand, two other events which happened within our own memory must be memorialized and given significance. These are the martyrdom of the six million victims of the Holocaust and the establishment of the State of Israel. For the one we have declared the twenty-seventh of Nisan as Yom Hasho'ah, and for the other we have declared the fifth of Iyar as Yom Ha'atzma'ut. Both are gaining more and more recognition by Klal Yisrael. Hence it was proposed and passed that no joyous functions be allowed on the weekend before the twenty-eighth of Nisan, and that it be declared a period of mourning for the six million martyrs. Beyond that there should be no prohibition whatsoever (see Law Committee archives).

We should add the caveat expressed by the Rama, who says that in order to avoid separation, we should strive to avoid a situation where some Jews in a city adopt one custom and others, another custom (O.H. 493:3). In large communities this may not be applicable, but in small ones it is good advice.

The Warsaw Ghetto Memorial. It has become the custom in many communities to memorialize the martyrs of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. There is, as yet, no uniform pattern of observance. However, the day has tended to become a memorial not only for the fighters of the Warsaw Ghetto but also for the six million martyrs. When a pattern finally crystallizes, this day will rival the ninth of Av in solemnity and in the memories it will evoke. As of this writing, the twenty-seventh of Nisan has been accepted as Yom Hasho'ah.

Yom Ha'atzma'ut. The fifth of Iyar has been designated the official day for celebrating Israel's independence, for it was on the fifth of Iyar, 5708, that Israel's independence was declared. In Israel it has become both a national and religious holiday. As the years pass, a tradition of observance is beginning to crystallize. A special service and a guide for observance have been drawn up by the Chief Rabbinate. In time Yom Ha'atzma'ut will certainly take its place alongside Hanukkah and Purim.

In the diaspora Yom Ha'atzma'ut has also been recognized as a day of rejoicing. The Rabbinical Assembly has prepared a special service that expresses thanks for the great deliverance and recognition of the interdependence of the Jewries of Israel and the diaspora.

In Israel the day preceding Independence Day is called Yom Hazikaron, a day of remembrance for all those who made the supreme sacrifice during the War of Liberation.

Pesach Sheini

In the time of the Temple, those who could not bring the Paschal lamb at the required time, either for reasons of ritual impurity or because they were traveling and were too far from Jerusalem to arrive in time for Pesach, could bring the Paschal lamb a month later, on the fourteenth of Iyar (Num. 9:612). Today the day on which they did this (called Pesach Sheini) is remembered with a slight variation in the service, i.e., Tahanun is not recited. In some places a piece of matsah is eaten during the day (Singer, Ziv Haminhagim, p. 104).

Lag Ba'Omer

The thirty-third day of the 'Omer, which falls on the eighteenth of Iyar, is a semiholiday (O.H. 493:2 in Rama). According to tradition, the calamities of the Hadrianic persecution were interrupted on the eighteenth of Iyar, and as a result it was declared a semiholiday (Maharil [Warsaw, 5634], p. 21; [Bnai Brak, 5719], pp. 41-42). Tahanun is not recited, weddings and joyous occasions are permitted, and one may cut his hair (O.H. 493:2 in Rama).

In Israel the day is also observed as hilula' Derabi Shim'on bar Yohai the Yahrzeit of Rabbi Shimon bar Yohai, the alleged author of the Zohar. Large numbers of people visit Rabbi Shimon bar Yohai's grave in Meron and celebrate the day as a full festival.

The origin of this celebration is attributed to the great kabbalist Isaac Luria. In Lag Ba'Omer he saw not only the cessation of the plague that afflicted Rabbi Akiva's disciples, but also the fact that Rabbi Akiva's surviving students saved the Torah. The student who was most famous in the eyes of the kabbalists was Rabbi Shimon bar Yohai to whom they ascribed the authorship of the Zohar. According to tradition, he died on the eighteenth of Iyar. It was an ancient custom to celebrate the Yahrzeit of great people as a holiday (Otsar Hageonim, Yebamot 241), and Rabbi Isaac Luria applied this to the Yahrzeit of Rabbi Shimon bar Yohai, thus making Lag Ba'Omer even more significant (see Wahrman, Hagei Yisra'el Umo'adaw, p. 167). Lag Ba'Omer is also called the scholars' festival because of its association with the students of Rabbi Akiva. It is perhaps for this reason that the celebration has been observed mostly by schoolchildren. It used to be customary for children to make bows and arrows and engage in archery on Lag Ba'Omer. This is an obvious reference to the warlike activities of Rabbi Akiva's followers. Later kabbalists saw an association with the rainbow, which is a symbol of redemption, since there is a tradition that the rainbow will appear in the sky as the harbinger of the final redemption (Benei Yisakhar, month of Iyar, 1).

2. Shavu'ot

Shavu'ot, occurring on the sixth and seventh of Sivan, is the second of the Three Pilgrimage Festivals. Like the other Pilgrimage Festivals, it commemorates an important event in the history of the Jewish people, it has an agricultural reference, marking a stage in the harvest, and it imparts an essential religious truth.

The agricultural reference is the most apparent since Shavu'ot marks the end of the counting of the 'Omer. The agricultural significance of Shavu'ot is also indicated by the first two references to the festival in the Torah: "And thou shalt observe the feast of weeks, even the first fruits of the wheat harvest" (Exod. 34:22); also, "And the feast of harvest, the first fruits of thy labors, which thou sowest in the field" (Exod. 23:16).

Thus two names are given to this festival: Hag Haqatsir (harvest festival), because of its agricultural aspect, and Hag Hashavu'ot, which does not indicate any characteristic of the festival except the date, i.e., that it comes after the counting of seven weeks (Deut. 16:10-12).

In the Talmud the name 'Atseret is also given to the festival (M. R.H. 1:2; B. Pes. 68b). Our sages regarded Shavu'ot as the conclusion of the festival of Pesach, and therefore called it 'Atseret, just as the conclusion of the Sukkot festival is called Shemini 'Atseret (Shir Hashirim Rabbah 7:2).

According to rabbinic interpretation of the Bible (B. Shab. 86b-88a), the Ten Commandments were given on the sixth day of Sivan. Shavu'ot thus is zman matan toratenu, commemorating this event and emphasizing the Torah's sanctity.

Torah, in its all-inclusive sense as the heritage of the children of Israel, is literally khayeynu veorekh yameynu ("our life and the length of our days"). Sa'adia Gaon said that Israel is a people by virtue of the Torah. It is one element in the Jewish "trinity": kudsha brikh hu, orayta v'yisrael--"the Holy One Blessed Be He, the Torah, and Israel"(Zohar, Aharei Mot 73a).

As the Hebrew phrase torah min hashamayim indicates, the Torah is divinely ordained. Its moral laws are both normative and of divine origin, possessing unique validity that we must affirm and emphasize every day.

Professor Kaplan has written: "...the moral law must be regarded not as some prudential arrangement or social convention, but as inherent in the very nature of reality. The human mind loses all sense of security, and suffers from failure of nerve the moment it begins to suspect that the moral law is man-made" (The Meaning of God in Modern Jewish Religion, p. 302).

The rabbis in the Midrash express the same thought poetically. Rabbi Abahu said in the name of Rabbi Yohanan: "When God gave the Torah, no bird sang or flew, no ox bellowed, the angels did not fly, the Serafim ceased from saying, 'Holy, holy,' the sea was calm, no creature spoke; the world was silent and still, and the divine voice said: 'I am the Lord thy God...'" (Exodus Rabbah 29:9). When God spoke the world was hushed. This gives us the common denominator in the various interpretations of torah min hashamayim. The validity of the moral law is not conventional or prudential, but divine.

"We should therefore recognize in the doctrine of Torah min hashamayim? the original prophetic discovery of the moral law as the principal self-revelation of God" (Kaplan, *ibid.*, p. 303).

Whether we consider torah min hashamayim to be a historical fact or a theological concept, the import is that the moral law has divine sanction.

"The unique element in the Jewish religion consisted in the conscious recognition that the chief function of the belief in God was to affirm and fortify the moral law The outstanding characteristic of the Jewish religion is its conscious emphasis upon the teaching that the moral law is the principal manifestation of God in the world" (Kaplan, *ibid.*, p. 302).

Shavu'ot is thus the festival that bids us emphasize the primacy of the moral law and the normative character of Judaism.

Observance

The laws concerning work on Shavu'ot are the same as on Pesach. The statutory services are also the same, with variations where Shavu'ot is mentioned. Thus in the 'Amidah we say *hag hashavuot hazeh zman matan toratenu*, and the reading of the Torah is, of course, especially selected for Shavu'ot. On both days of Shavu'ot two Torah scrolls are removed from the ark. On the first day, in the first scroll, we read Exodus 19 and 20, which tell of the giving of the Ten Commandments. In the second scroll we read Numbers 28:26-31, which tells of the festival of Shavu'ot. The Haftarah is Ezekiel 1:1-28, 3: 12, which contains the prophet's vision of God.

On the second day we read Deuteronomy 15:19-16:17, which speaks of the festivals. On a Sabbath we read Deuteronomy 14:22-16:17. The Haftarah is Habakkuk 2:20-3:19, where the revelation at Sinai is mentioned (O.H. 494:1-2; Levush, O.H. 494:1).

On the second day *yizkor* is recited after the Torah reading, as it is on the last day of Pesach, on Shemini 'Atseret, and on Yom Kippur (Levush, O.H. 490:9 and 494:2).

Special Observances for Shavu'ot

It is customary to start the evening services of the first night later than usual. This is to satisfy the implication of the verse sheva shabatot tmiymot (Lev. 23:15, i.e., we count seven complete weeks; therefore we wait to make sure that the forty-ninth day has been completed O.H. 494 in M.A. and M.D.).

It was an ancient custom for Jews to remain awake for the entire first night of Shavu'ot to study Torah. The Zohar ascribes this custom to particularly pious Jews (Emor 98a). In Eastern Europe it was widely observed, and a special text for the occasion, known as tikun leil shavuot, developed which contained the first and last verses of each Sidrah, the first and last passages of each tractate of the Mishnah, and excerpts from the Zohar.

A quaint reason is given for the practice of staying awake on the first night of Shavu'ot. Legend tells that the children of Israel slept so soundly the night before the Torah was given that they had to be awakened with thunder and lightening. We, on the contrary, are up all night and need not be awakened (O.H. 494 in M.A. and Shir Hashirim Rabbah).

The more obvious reason is that we review the Torah to celebrate the anniversary of its giving.

'Aqdamut

The hymn known as 'Aqdamut (because it begins with that word) is a song of praise to God for having chosen Israel and for granting us the Torah, hence its inclusion in the Shavu'ot liturgy (Levush, O.H. 494:1).

It was once customary to chant 'Aqdamut responsively at the Torah reading after the first man was called and had said the benediction and the reader had read the first verse of the reading. Now we say it before the first benediction (Singer, Ziv Haminhagim, p. 112; M.D. on O.H. 494). 'Aqdamut was written by Rabbi Meir of Orleans, a cantor in Worms, Germany, who lived in the eleventh century. Evidently its purpose was to strengthen the people's faith during the Crusades.

The Book of Ruth

The Book of Ruth is read on the second day of Shavu'ot. The custom is mentioned in Masekhet Soferim (14:16), and the fact that the first chapter of Midrash Ruth deals with the giving of the Torah is evidence that this custom was already well established in the period when this Midrash was compiled (Dunsky, Midrash Ruth, p. 3).

Many explanations are given for the reading of Ruth. The most quoted reason is that Ruth's coming to Israel took place around the time of Shavu'ot, and her acceptance of the Jewish faith was like Matan Torah for the people of Israel (Abudraham Hashalem, p. 240; Levush O.H. 494:2). The acceptance of the Torah entails suffering and sacrifice for us just as it did for Ruth (Yalkut Ruth 586).

A more logical reason is the desire to have sections from all three divisions of the Bible-- i.e., Torah, Nevi'im, and Ketuvim--in the liturgy of Shavu'ot and to show that they are all divine. And why the Book of Ruth? Because in the Talmud (B. B.B. 14b) Ruth is counted as the first book in the Ketuvim (Singer, Ziv Haminhagim, p. 112).

Since the Book of Ruth ends with the genealogy of David, whose forebear Ruth was, it has been suggested that it is read on Shavu'ot because there is a legend that David died on Shavu'ot (P. Hag. 2:3, P. Bet. 2:4, Ruth Rabbah 3:2).

A recent scholar has suggested that the custom had its origin in the polemics against the Karaites. The Karaites denied the validity of the Oral Law. According to biblical law, neither an Ammonite nor a Moabite can enter the fold of Israel. How, then, was Ruth accepted? The rabbis interpreted the law as referring to males only; hence Ruth could become part of the people of Israel (B. Yeb. 76b). But this interpretation is based on the Oral Law, not the Written, and thus it is proof of the validity of the Oral Law. Shavu'ot was an appropriate time to show the equal validity of both the Oral and the Written Law (Maimon, Hagim Umo'adim, p. 271).

There is a difference of opinion as to whether a benediction should be recited before the Book of Ruth is read (see Levush O.H. 494:2; Rama on O.H. 490:9; Mishnah Berurah ad loc.; Shneur Zalman of Lyady, Shulhan 'Arukh 494:13, 17). The present practice is not to recite a benediction.

The Eating of Dairy Dishes

It is customary to eat dairy dishes on the first day of Shavu'ot. Many reasons have been given for the custom. One derives it from the verse "honey and milk shall be under your tongue" (Song of Songs 4:11), which is made to refer to the Torah, implying that the words of the Torah are as pleasant and acceptable to our ears and hearts as milk and honey are to our tongues (Kol Bo 58).

It has also been suggested that just as we have two food items (the shankbone and the egg) at the Seder to represent the two sacrificial offerings brought to the Temple on Pesach, so on Shavu'ot we have two types of food, first milk and later meat, in commemoration of the two special sacrificial offerings that were brought on Shavu'ot (O.H. 494:3).

We must mention one more reason which is still taken seriously by many though it seems almost facetious. With the giving of the Torah the dietary laws were established. Hence, when the people came home from Sinai they could not eat meat because they had none that was prepared properly. To prepare new meat properly would take too long. They had no choice, therefore, but to eat milk dishes (O.H. 494:2 in Mishnah Berurah 12).

A more logical reason, which may be an afterthought, however, connects the custom of eating dairy with restraint and self-control. The Torah is gained by eschewing pleasures and excesses. Meat is the food of those who know no restraint. Ascetics and people who seek self-control usually limit themselves to dairy dishes. Eating dairy dishes on Shavu'ot is a reminder that the Torah is given to him who lives the sober life rather than that of pleasure (Hirshovitz, Otsar Kol Minhagei Yeshurun, p. 201).

It is also customary on Shavu'ot to decorate the synagogue with flowers and foliage, and in some places the floors of the synagogue were strewn with fresh grass as a reminder of the agricultural character of the festival (O.H. 494:3 in Rama).

In some places the synagogues were adorned with branches and large plants as a reminder that according to the Mishnah (R.H. 1:2), the world is judged regarding the fruits of the trees on Shavu'ot. On Shavu'ot we thus pray for God to bless the fruit of the trees (B. R.H. 16a). Today, when flowers decorate the pulpit at all times, we simply add to the decorations and vary them.

In Israel many of the old customs are being revived, especially those having to do with the agricultural aspects of Shavu'ot. The bringing of bikkurim (first fruits) to the Temple in Jerusalem, as described in the Mishnah, was a gala affair (M. Bik. 3:1-8). It was discontinued after the destruction of the Temple, but has been revived in the villages and towns of Israel, where the children bring the first fruits of their fields with special festivities (Wahrman, Hagei Yisra'el Umo'adaw, p. 1186).

Confirmation

In many synagogues, confirmation services are held either on the first night or the first morning of Shavu'ot. The confirmation service has no roots in Jewish tradition but was instituted in the early nineteenth century in Germany by the Reform movement. It was frankly an importation from the Lutheran Church, but it struck roots in the Jewish community and was accepted by the Conservative synagogues and even by some Orthodox synagogues. There is no uniform service, no uniform age, and no uniform curriculum for preparation. The purpose, however, is to solemnly initiate Jewish boys and girls into their ancestral faith.

There were various motives behind the introduction of this rite. It was supposed to be a substitute for Bar Mitzwah, and would thus apply to boys only. Then it was supposed to give equality to women as an equivalent to the Bar Mitzwah. Later, when the Bar Mitzwah rite was eliminated in the Reform movement, confirmation became the practice for both boys and girls (see Jewish Encyclopedia, 4:219).

In America the practice became so widespread that a Reform rabbi has written: "The confirmation ceremony, which generally attracts congregations that overflow the synagogues, is one of the chief contributions that Reform Judaism has made to the

evolution of Jewish education and Jewish religious ceremonies in the American synagogues" (Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, 3:330).

Recent developments, however, have shaken this confidence. The Bar Mitzvah has been reestablished with full force in all synagogues. And now--a contribution of the Conservative movement--the Bat Mitzvah rite has been spreading to all segments of Judaism. Thus, all the original reasons for confirmation have disappeared. The protagonists of confirmation are hard put to find new meaning for it so as not to make it a duplication of the Bar and Bat Mitzvah ceremonies. Where Bar Mitzvah has a basis in tradition, and Bat Mitzvah has a basis in the equalization of the sexes, confirmation is a hora'at sha'ah (temporary measure) which has lost its momentum (see CCAR Journal, June 1966, esp. the articles by Klein, Wolf, and Silverman).

In a number of synagogues confirmation has been eliminated, and instead there is a reconsecration rite with an entirely different purpose in mind.

Unit XI:

Sukkot

Introduction

Preliminary Observances

The Building of a Sukkah

The Four Species

Services

The Intermediate Days

Hosha'na' Rabbah

Shemini 'Atseret

Simchat Torah

XI. Sukkot

1. Introduction

The festival of Sukkot is the third of the Pilgrimage Festivals. It begins on the fifteenth of Tishre and continues for seven days. The first two of these are celebrated as full holidays with all the prescriptions already mentioned. The five days that follow are Hol Hamo'ed--weekdays which retain some aspects of the festival. The seventh day (the fifth of the Intermediate Days) is Hosha'nah Rabbah, with special observances of its own. There follow two concluding days which are separate festivals (B. Suk. 47a) and bear individual names: Shemini 'Atseret and Simhat Torah.

Like the other two Pilgrimage Festivals, Sukkot commemorates an event or period in the history of the Jewish people, has an agricultural connotation, and teaches a number of religious truths.

The Bible stresses the historical aspect: "You shall live in booths seven days; all citizens in Israel shall live in booths, in order that future generations may know that I made the Israelite people live in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt. I am the Lord your God" (Lev, 23:42, 43). The agricultural theme is indicated earlier: "when you have gathered in the yield of your land, you shall observe the festival of the Lord [to last] seven days" (Lev. 23:29). Sukkot is thus a harvest festival during which we rejoice over the bounty of the harvest and are given an opportunity to thank God for his blessings.

While the Sukkah symbolizes the historical aspect of the festival, the Four Species bring to mind the agricultural, "on the first day you shall take the product of hadar trees, branches of palm trees, boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days" (Lev. 23:40).

The names of the festival also reflect these various themes. The name used most often is Sukkot, (the Feast of Booths, or Tabernacles); it is also called the Feast of Ingathering and simply Chag, the festival par excellence. While rejoicing is enjoined for all festivals, in the case of Sukkot an extra measure of enjoyment was prescribed: "And thou shalt rejoice in thy festival . . . and thou shalt be altogether joyful" (Deut. 16:14-16). Hence in the 'Amidah the descriptive phrase for this particular festival is z'man simchatanu.

The three names are also indicative of the religious truths that the festival seeks to impart. We noted that the reason for the Sukkah is: "that I made the Israelite people live in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt" (Lev. 23:43). The rabbis were not satisfied with the obvious meaning of this verse. While Rabbi Akiva says sukkot mamash, i.e., that the booths mentioned in the Bible were real booths in which the

children of Israel dwelt while in the desert, Rabbi Eliezer suggests that they were *ananaei kavod*, or clouds of glory with which God surrounded the children of Israel to protect them while they wandered in the desert (B. Suk. 11b).

The interpretation of Rabbi Eliezer is expanded in the *Pesiqta deRav Kahana*, "Why do the children of Israel make a Sukkah? For the miracles that God wrought for them when they went out of Egypt, surrounding them with clouds of glory and shielding them, as it is said: 'For I make the children of Israel dwell in booths' [Lev. 23:43]. The Holy One, blessed be He, said to them: 'My children, make ye booths and dwell in them seven days that ye may be reminded of the miracles I wrought for you in the desert'" (*Pesiqta deRav Kahana*, ed. Buber, p. 188b). The building of the Sukkah was thus a means of infusing faith in God, particularly in time of distress.

Rabbi Akiva's interpretation, , is obviously more suitable to the modern temper, and it, too, suggests a significant truth. The reminder of the period when the children of Israel sojourned in the desert is a motif that occurs again and again in the Bible. In the Talmud the is usually mentioned pejoratively, but in the Bible, particularly in the Prophets, the desert period was considered an ideal time in Jewish history, a time when life was simple but noble. With longing the prophet Jeremiah recalls: "I remember the devotion of your youth, your love as a bride. how you followed me in the wilderness in a land not sown" (Jer. 2:2). When the children of Israel entered Canaan and encountered the vices and corruption of urban civilization, they looked back with nostalgia to the nomadic period of their history, when they were free of these corrupting influences. They saw in this nomadic period a set of standards by which they could purify the civilization of their day. They looked with admiration at the sect known as the Rechabites, who wanted to reproduce the life of the nomads in Canaan itself (Jer. 35-6, 1 Kings 10:15). In our day Sukkot should become a call to the ethical life, free from the corruption and vices of the affluent society.

Maimonides also gives the historical aspect a moral and ethical turn when he says that the purpose of remembering the days of the wilderness is 1, "to teach man to remember his evil days, in his days of prosperity. he will thereby be induced to thank God repeatedly and to lead a modest and humble life" (Maimonides, *Moreh Nevukhim* III:47).

A more pietistic tone is struck by the well-known medieval moralist Isaac Aboab, who said; "The Sukkah is designed to warn us that man is not to put his trust in the size or strength or beauty of his home, though it be filled with all precious things; nor must he rely upon the help of any human being, however powerful. But let him put his trust in the great God whose word called the universe into being, for He alone is mighty, and His promises alone are sure" (Isaac Aboab, *Menorat Hama'or* III, 4:6; ed. Mossad Harav Kook, p. 315).

Rightly does Dr. Mordecai Kaplan conclude: "From the foregoing circumstances [that life in the wilderness was purer and freer than life in the civilization of Canaan] it follows that having the Israelites relive their Wilderness experience on the festival of Sukkot [by living in a Sukkah] was bound to place them in a frame of mind which enabled them to detach themselves from the order of life which they had come to accept as normal and to view it critically" (The Meaning of God in Modern Jewish Religion, p. 208).

The agricultural theme of the festival is called to mind by its other name: . The crops of the field having been gathered, the people rejoiced before the Lord in gratitude for the blessings which He bestowed upon them. When agriculture ceased to be the main occupation of the people, the theme of gratitude to God was still valid. Consequently, the symbolic expression of the agricultural theme through the Four Species received a new meaning.

The Midrash thus made the four species symbolize the need for the unity of the Jewish people that comes when each segment of the people receives due consideration. Therefore the Midrash says: "Just as the Etrog has taste and fragrance, so there are in Israel men who are both learned and doers of good deeds; as the Lulav, whose fruit is palatable but is without fragrance, so there are those who are learned but without good deeds; as the myrtle has a Pleasant odor but is tasteless, so there are men of good deeds, but who possess no scholarship; as the willow is neither edible nor of agreeable fragrance, so there are those who are neither learned nor possessed of good deeds" (Wayiqra Rabbah 30:12). In binding the species together and pronouncing the benediction over them, we assert that the unity must include all segments of the community; only when each has its proper place, can there be a benediction.

Another comment of the Midrash stresses the unity of the human personality necessary for the moral life. On the verse "all my bones shall proclaim, 'O Lord who is like unto thee?'" (Ps. 35-10) the Midrash comments: "This verse refers to the Lulav. The back of the Lulav is like the backbone of man, the myrtle like the eye, the willow, the mouth, and the Etrog, the heart. Thus David said: 'There are no limbs greater than these for they equal the entire body in importance; hence: all my bones will proclaim . . .'" (Wayiqra Rabbah 30:14).

This psychological insight suggests that the entire personality must be involved in the search for happiness. Happiness is experienced whenever the human being, in all his relationships, participates in the fulfillment of some specific need, or needs, and there is no inner conflict of the type which might lead to the disintegration of personality (Kaplan, The Meaning of God, p. 226).

The unity of the human personality and of the Jewish people leads our thoughts to the unity and interdependence of all humanity--i.e., to the Messianic ideal. The Messianic ideal is symbolized, according to the rabbis, by the sacrifice of seventy oxen (Num. 29:13-34), corresponding to the proverbial seventy nations of the world, for whose

welfare these were offered on the altar of the Temple in Jerusalem (B. Suk. 52b). In this connection the prophet Zechariah invited all the nations of the world to "So up to Jerusalem from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles" (Zech. 14.16).

Samson Raphael Hirsch also saw in the Sukkah a symbol of universal peace and brotherhood. The Ma'ariv service on Sabbaths and festivals contains the prayer . The term sukkah is used in the prayer to symbolize peace and brotherhood, which shall be based not on common economic and political interests, but on the prophetic vision: "On that day the Lord shall be one and His name one" (Horeb, pp. 126 f.).

The festival has a third name, --or the festival par excellence. Hence we add the description , "the time of our rejoicing," when we mention the festival in the 'Amidah and in the Qiddush. The rabbis said: "The Divine presence is not made manifest to man through melancholy . . . but rather joy" (B. Shab. 30b). In the Jewish tradition, happiness is requisite to entering into a conscious relationship with God (Kaplan, The Meaning Of God, p. 225).

This happiness is best expressed through gratitude to God. The Midrash says: "in the millennium all other sacrifices will be abolished, but not the thanksgiving offering; all other prayers will be abolished, but not the prayer of thanksgiving" (Wayiqra Rabbah 9:7). Thus gratitude and thankfulness have supreme value as the essence of religion.

2. Preliminary Observances

The four days between Yom Kippur and Sukkot have a festive touch of their own. Fasting is prohibited and Tahanun is not recited. If a Sabbath occurs during these four days, neither Av Harahamim nor Tsidqatekha is said. The Temple of Solomon was dedicated during these days. and today pious Jews are occupied with building a Sukkah and acquiring an Etrog and Lulav, hence the more festive mood (O.H. 624, end).

3. The Building of a Sukkah

There is an ancient maxim mitzvah ha'ba'ah l'yadcha al tachamitzanah ("if an opportunity to perform a mitzvah presents itself to you, do not be slow in performing it") (based on comment in Mekhilta, Masekhta d'Pisha, Parasha 9. ed. Lauterbach, vol. 1, p. 74). Hence, the building of the Sukkah should be started immediately after Yom Kippur (O.H. 625:1). Some pious Jews drive in the first nail, so to speak, the night after Yom Kippur so as to proceed directly from one mitzvah to another (O.H. 624).

The Sukkah is a temporary structure constructed for the festival of Sukkot, It must be erected in the open air, under the sky, not in a room or under a tree (O.H. 626:1). It consists of four walls and a removable covering. This covering, called sekhakh, must be of material that grows from the soil, has been detached from the ground, and cannot be

defiled (O.H. 629:1). Hides and the like are excluded because they do not grow from the soil, vines and tendrils are excluded because they are attached to the ground, cloth, utensils, or metal objects are excluded because they can become ritually defiled. The sekhakh is usually of cut branches or plants.

The sekhakh should be loose enough so that one can see the sky, yet thick enough so that the shadow it casts on the ground exceeds the light thrown by the sun: tzilata mrubah metamata (O.H. 631:1,3). No open space measuring three hand-breadths, or about twelve inches, or longer, may be left (O.H. 632:2). There is only one class of objects which, though they conform to the above requirement, may not be used for sekhakh: grasses or leaves that dry quickly and start failing, or that have an offensive odor (O.H. 629:14).

The walls may be constructed of any material (O.H. 630:1), but materials with an offensive odor or that will shrivel within the seven days should not be used (Rama on O.H. 680: 1). Theoretically two complete walls and part of a third wall satisfy the minimum requirements for a Sukkah, but it is customary to have four walls (O.H. 630:5 in Rama), and then should be strong enough to withstand the impact of ordinary winds (O.H. 630:10).

The Sukkah should not be constructed in a conic shape--all walls and no sekhakh--because the name Sukkah implies that there is sekhakh on top (O.H. 631:10).

The Sukkah should not be more than twenty cubits high (about thirty feet) (O.H. 631:1) because it would then cease to be a temporary dwelling since the walls would have to be exceedingly strong (O.H. 631:1 in M.A. 1); nor should it be less than ten hand-breadths (approximately three feet) high. It should be at least seven by seven hand-breadths in area (approximately twenty-six inches square)--the minimum space necessary for at least one person (O.H. 633:1).

Some people build a permanent Sukkah in their houses by having a removable ceiling in one of the rooms. During the festival the ceiling is removed and sekhakh is put in its place. In some cases, the roof is opened by means of pulleys. Both are permissible (O.H. 626:1, 3). If it rains the roof may be closed and then reopened when the rain stops (Rama on O.H. 631:3).

On the basis of the rabbinic maxim that the commandments should have aesthetic appeal-hitna'ah l'fanav b'mitzvot (B. Shab. 133b), it has become customary to decorate the Sukkah. Each country uses its own aesthetic forms in fulfilling this requirement (Sefer Maharil, Hilkhos Sukkah; O.H. 627:4).

The building of a Sukkah is an obligation for each individual. However, the custom has become widespread to build a Sukkah in a yard near the synagogue for use by all the worshippers, at least for Qiddush or light refreshment. The synagogue Sukkah may be

used by those who are observant but find it difficult to build a Sukkah on their own premises. All the laws pertaining to the Sukkah apply here too. We have reason to believe that such communal Sukkahs are not a new development but have precedents as far back as the Middle Ages (see *Shibolei Haleqet*, ed. Buber, p. 314; *Sefer Hamo'adim*, Sukkot, p. 25; Abraham ben Nathan of Lunel, *Sefer Hamanbig*, p. 64).

9. Simhat Torah

Simhat Torah, the festival of rejoicing with the Torah, is a fitting finale for the holiday season. In the diaspora it falls on the ninth day of Sukkot, and is devoted completely to rejoicing. In Israel, where the eighth day is the last day, the practices of Simhat Torah are observed on Shemini 'Atseret.

The name Simhat Torah is not mentioned in the Talmud. It occurs first in the post-geonic literature (Isaac Ibn Ghayyat, *Sha'arei Simhah*, pt. 1, p. 118; Avraham Yaari, *Toldot Hag Simhat Torah*, p. 29) and in the Zohar (Pinhas 256b). Since the concluding portion of the Torah is read on this day, it has become an occasion for rejoicing and an opportunity to demonstrate Israel's love for the Torah. Hence the name Simhat Torah (Abudraham Hashalem, p. 300; O.H. 669:1 in Rama and in M.A. ad loc.).

It has been asked why the reading of the last Sidrah, *vzot habrachah*, assigned to Simhat Torah. Since the reading of the Torah should be completed during the year, it would have been logical to read it on the last Sabbath of the year, the Sabbath before Rosh Hashanah. Furthermore, on Simhat Torah, which is a *safeiq shemini*, we should read what is usually read on the last day of a festival, *kol habchor* of *parashat re'eh*.

In answer, it is explained that there was, first, the desire to join the joy of *siyyum haTorah* with *siyyum hehag*. Second, the purpose was to have the Torah portion similar to the Haftarah. Originally, the Haftarah contained the blessing that King Solomon gave the children of Israel at the conclusion of the festival as they were ready to depart (I Kings 8:16), and the Sidrah *vzot habrachah*, the blessings that Moses gave the children of Israel when he was about to depart (Abudraham Hashalem, p. 300).

Today, when we have two days for the concluding festival, we adopt a compromise. On the eighth day we read the special portion of the festival and the Haftarah from the Book of Kings; on the ninth we read *vzot habrachah*, and the Haftarah is the first chapter of Joshua, which is a natural continuation of the portion that tells of the death of Moses (see Avraham Yaari, *Toldot Hag Simhat Torah*, pp. 33-34; and Zevin, *Hamo'adim Bahalakhah*, p. 141).

The festivities begin in the evening with *Ma'ariv*. This is the regular festival service with the difference that after *Qaddish* we have *Haqqafot* and the reading of the Torah. The *Haqqafot* are introduced with *atah hareita*, a collection of biblical verses in praise of God and the Torah. Each verse is read by the reader and then repeated by the

congregation (Maharil, Sukkot). In some places each verse is read by a different member of the congregation and then repeated by the entire congregation.

When the verse *vayehi binsoa* is reached, the ark is opened. When the last verse has been recited, all the scrolls are removed from the ark and are carried in procession, *hakafot* in the synagogue. This is done seven times. In each procession each torah is given to a different person so that as many as possible should have an opportunity to participate. Each *Haqqafah* is done to the chanting of prescribed hymns. To these are added songs and hymns of a joyous nature (O.H. 669:1 in Rama). The children, too, are invited to participate, and are allowed more freedom for their pranks than usual.

After the seven *Haqqafot* all the scrolls of the Torah except one are returned to the ark. The reader lifts the remaining one and chants *shema*, *echat elohenu* and *gadlu*.

Custom varies about what is read on the night of Simhat Torah. In some places any parashah that the scroll happens to be rolled to is read. The prevailing custom is to read *vzot habrachah* and to call up three people. We conclude with half-Qaddish. The Torah is returned to the ark with the chanting of the appropriate hymns and the service is concluded. At home the same procedure is followed as on the night before, except that Qiddush is recited in the house and not in the Sukkah.

In the morning the *Shaharit* service is the usual festival service, as the day before, up to the completion of *Hallel*. After *Hallel* the *Haqqafot* follow as on the night before. After the *Haqqafot* all the scrolls of the Torah except three are returned to the ark. Three Torah scrolls are needed, one for the reading of the *Sidrah vzot habrachah*, the second for the reading of the first chapter of *bereshit*, and the third for the *Maftir* (O.H. 669:1).

The procedure is as follows. Since on Simhat Torah everyone in the synagogue is called up for an *'aliyah* (Rama on O.H. 669:1), we read in the first Torah up to *uvnaivato shechakim* (Deut. 33:26) in five portions. In order to give everyone an opportunity for an *'aliyah*, this portion is read again and again (Levush, O.H. 669). In a large congregation, in order not to prolong the service unduly, the Torah is read in several places or several people are called for each *'aliyah*.

For the last *'aliyah* all the children are called up (Levush, O.H. 669:1). This honor is usually given to one of the distinguished worshippers, who spreads his *Talit* like a canopy under which the children stand and recite the blessings. After the second benediction, the congregation recites the blessing which Jacob gave to his grandchildren, the sons of Joseph (Gen. 48:15-16; Rama on O.H. 669).

The last part of the *Sidrah*, which begins with *meona elohei kedem* (Deut. 33:27), is reserved for the *Hatan Torah*, the name by which we call the *'aliyah* which completes the reading of the Torah. This *'aliyah* is usually given to the rabbi or to a distinguished member of the community, He is called up with a special *piyyut* in praise of the Torah.

When the reading is finished, the second Torah is placed on the reading table, and the Magbiah and Golel for the first Torah are called. The second Torah is opened and the first chapter of Genesis is read. Thus we start to read the Torah again just as soon as we finish reading it. The study of the Torah is an unending process (Tur, O.H. 669; Abudraham Hashalem, p. 300). The person who receives this 'aliyah is called the Hatan Bereshit. This honor, too, is given to a distinguished member of the congregation, and he, too, is called with a special piyyut that sings the praises of God and the Torah.

When the first chapter of Genesis is read, the congregation participates in the readings by saying aloud vayehi erev vayehi boker. The reader repeats the phrase. At the sixth day, in addition to this phrase, the congregation recites aloud the whole passage of vayechulu (Gen. 2:1-3) and then the reader chants it (Liqutei Meharish, 3:109).

It is customary in many places to spread a Talit like a canopy over the Hatan Torah and the Hatan Bereshit.

After the Hatan Bereshit has recited the second benediction, the third Torah is placed on the table, half Qaddish is said, and the Torah is rolled. The Maftir is the same as on the day before. The Haftarah is the first chapter of Joshua. Since the Torah ends with the death of Moses, it is proper to tell how his work was continued by Joshua, his disciple (Levush, O.H. 669).

The Musaf service is the usual festival Musaf except that the joyous mood is maintained by the ingenuity of the reader. Latitude is given to merriment, but no vulgarity is permitted, since our joy should be pure and exalted, stemming from our awareness that the Torah is a precious gift, and that it leads to the purification of the heart and the ennoblement of the mind.

It has become a custom in many communities to invite friends home for Qiddush and for continued rejoicing in the spirit of Simhat Torah. This is done particularly by those who have been given the special honors at the morning services. Minhah is the usual festival service, and Ma'ariv is the weekday service, with the addition of atah chonantanu and Havdalah as on every Motsa'ei Yom Tov.

Unit XII:

The Days of Awe (I)

Introduction

The Month of Elul

Selichot

'Erev Rosh Hashanah

Rosh Hashanah

Evening Services

The Morning Service

Torah Reading

XII. The Days of Awe (I)

I. Introduction

The term Yamim Nora'im ("Days of Awe") was first used as a designation for the High Holy Day period by the Maharil (1365-1427). While the term now seems quite appropriate, the fact that it came so late in the history of the festivals is evidence that the solemn mood associated with the High Holy Days is the result of a process of development.

Today we know the Yamim Nora'im as a time of contemplation and prayer, meditation and stock-taking, repentance and atonement. Like other sacred moments, it has its periods of preparation and consummation. The preparatory period begins with the month of Elul.

The main themes of this penitential period are the sovereignty of God and repentance. Man is like the ladder of Jacob, which was "set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven" (Gen. 28:12). He is therefore capable either of rising to noble heights or of failing into a life of sin--the choice is his (Maimonides, Hil. Teshuvah 5: 1). Both choices emerge out of man's nature. Repentance is the remaking of man's nature in the direction of righteous living (ibid. 2:2).

Transposing this into modern terminology we would say: "Man's sin is his clinging to the lower rather than the higher self. His sin may express itself in deeds done and in deeds not done. But every deficiency, every sin, has also a relationship to his Creator. It is a withdrawal from God, from the God whose image he bears. On the other hand, every step forward in his quest for perfection is a return to God" (Bokser, Judaism, p. 236).

This is the Teshuvah that signalizes the Days of Awe. It is a call for a return to God.

"The days of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur summon man to the vision that his real self is the divine image within him, that the meaning of his life be measured in the victory he has achieved in disciplining his baser self and bending it to serve his higher purpose. These days summon him to continue his quest toward the highest and to that end to renounce his sins, his deficiencies. It is because every man can be better than he is that every man needs to renounce deficiency, to overcome sin" (ibid. pp. 235f.).

"The need for Teshuvah is grounded in one sense on the claim which God has upon man. God is the father, the provider, the gracious giver, of all we have and of all we prize. He yearns for our love not because our love adds anything to His perfection, but because our love for Him is an indication that we have understood our true relationship to Him.

"But the need for Teshuvah is also grounded on the consequences which derive from the alienation of man from God. Man is free, if he will, to turn his back upon his Creator, but he pays a price for this. For our lives are constantly under God's judgment. Life without God is life beset by misery of loneliness and frustration. Sin is a kind of sickness of spirit, the only therapy open to us is to renounce sin and to return to God. Teshuvah is the road to the healing of the spirit" (ibid.).

2. The Month of Elul

Because of the great solemnity surrounding the High Holy Days, a whole month was ordained as a preparatory period. The period concluded on Yom Kippur, and was later extended to Hosha'nah Rabbah, the seventh day of Sukkot. A hint regarding the length of this period is found in the forty days that Moses, according to the biblical account, spent in heaven before receiving the second tablets. These forty days started on the first of Elul and ended on Yom Kippur (Pirquei DeRabbi Eli'ezer 46).

A number of customs and observances have been adopted for the month of Elul to accentuate the theme of repentance. The Shofar is sounded every morning, excluding Sabbaths, immediately after the morning services, beginning with the first day of the month and continuing for the rest of the month with the exception of the morning before Rosh Hashanah (O.H. 581:3 in Rama).

The Shofar is a call to repentance (Maharil, Hil, 'Aseret Yemei Teshuvah). Our devotional literature, sifrei musar, connects it with the ascent of Moses to heaven to receive the second tablets. As already mentioned, Moses ascended on the first of Elul (Mahzor Vitry, ed. Hurwitz, pp. 361f., quoting Pirquei DeRabbi Eli'ezer: Tur, O.H. 581; Levush, O.H. 581). On the morning before Rosh Hashanah, the sounding of the Shofar is omitted in order to differentiate between the sounding of the Shofar on Rosh Hashanah, which is prescribed in the Bible, and that of the month of Elul, which was adopted later (Levush, O.H. 581:1, O.H. 581:3 in M.D. 4 and M.A. 14; see also in Mishnah Berurah 24).

Another practice is the recitation of Psalm 27 at the conclusion of the morning and evening services, beginning with the first day of Elul and concluding on Hosha'na' Rabbah. This practice is based on a Midrash which interprets the first verse of the psalm as follows: "'The Lord is my light' on Rosh Hashanah, 'my salvation' on Yom Kippur, 'whom shall I fear' on Hosha'na' Rabbah" (Midrash Tehillim 27:4).

3. Selihot

Selihot, or penitential prayers, are recited before the morning service during the month of Elul and between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur (O.H. 581:1). The Sefardim begin reciting Selihot on the first day of Elul; the Ashkenazim, on the Sunday before Rosh Hashanah. If Rosh Hashanah falls on Tuesday or earlier in the week, the recitation of Selihot begins on the Sunday morning of the preceding week (ibid. in Rama). We should

have at least four days during which Selihot are recited. One of the reasons for this is that a sacrificial offering in the Temple was examined for four days for defects or blemishes that would disqualify it from being sacrificed. Man should consider himself to be like a sacrificial offering on Rosh Hashanah and hence needs four days for self-examination (ibid. in B.H. 5). In America it has become customary to hold the first Selihot service on Saturday night after midnight. Since people are in the habit of staying up late on Saturday nights, it is easier for them to attend such services than to rise early the next morning. Another commendable custom is to have a study session during the hours preceding the Selihot service at which some aspect of the meaning and purpose of the High Holy Days is discussed. Some synagogues have social affairs prior to Selihot, but this is a reprehensible practice which should be discontinued. The mood of frivolity is not a fit preparation for penitential prayers.

The Selihot service is a collection of penitential prayers, the work of liturgical poets, paitanim, who flourished during the ten centuries following the close of the talmudic era. The structure of the service follows a definite pattern.

Originally the service consisted of several groups of biblical verses, each climaxed by the recitation of the thirteen attributes: adonai adonai el rahum v'hanun. In the fifth or the sixth century, el melech yoshev was composed as a prelude to the recitation of the thirteen attributes (Arzt, Justice and Mercy, p. 207). In geonic times the service was further expanded with piyyutim. At present the standard form is to start with Psalm 145 and end with shomer yisrael, both being followed by Qaddish, the first with Hatsi Qaddish and the latter with Qaddish Shalem, in order to correspond to the pattern of the regular service (Levush, O.H. 581:1). The collection of biblical quotations, the thirteen attributes and their introductory prayers, the short confession ashamnu, and some concluding prayers are the constant of each service. The variables are the piyyutim, as different ones are recited each day.

4. 'Erev Rosh Hashanah

On the Sabbath preceding Rosh Hashanah the prayer for the new month is omitted. The purpose of this prayer is to announce when the new month begins, and it is not necessary to do so when the beginning of the new month is also Rosh Hashanah (O.H. 417 in Mishnah Berurah, Sha'ar Hatsiyun 2). Folklore has added another reason which was once taken very seriously: l'arbev et hasatan, ("in order to confuse Satan"). Satan is waiting for Rosh Hashanah in order to speak ill of the children of Israel before the throne of judgment. The omission of the prayer for the new month will mislead him about the date, and thus he will miss his chance (Isaac Tyrnau. Sefer Haminhagim, p. 32).

The day before Rosh Hashanah has a special cluster of customs and observances all its own. The Selihot are more extensive than on other mornings (Levush, O.H. 581:2). Even a person who is sitting Shiv'ah, and thus would normally stay home, may leave his house

in order to join the congregation in the synagogue to say Selihot (O.H. 581:1). Folklore suggests that the omission of the blowing of the Shofar at this service will mislead Satan into believing that Rosh Hashanah is past (M.A. in O.H. 581:3, sec. 14). As in the case of all festivals, Tahanun is omitted at Shaharit and Minhah on the day before Rosh Hashanah (O.H. 581:3).

In some congregations Hattarat Nedarim follows immediately after the morning services. The procedure is as follows. The person who wants to be released from vows that he may have forgotten about should declare so in the presence of three who constitute a court. Then the court releases him from these vows by declaring hakol yihyu mutarim lach, ("you are absolved from all these"). Then follows m'sirat moda'ah, a precautionary declaration against future vows. Both the individual's declaration and the court's response have a formalized text printed in some prayer books. This should not be construed as a general amnesty on vows but rather as bearing only on those of which one is unaware or which one may have forgotten, and only if they pertain to himself and not others (Tur, O.H. 619; Shiblei Haleqet, ed. Buber, 317).

It is customary to replace the regular parokhet and the cover of the reading table with white ones until after Yom Kippur, white being a symbol of atonement and grace (Agnon, Days of Awe, p. 49).

It is also customary to visit the graves of dear ones on the day before Rosh Hashanah (O.H. 581:4 in Rama). In some communities this practice is not limited to the day before Rosh Hashanah but is extended to the entire penitential period. Many congregations have established the fine custom of holding a public memorial service at the cemetery. After the service, or before, each individual visits the graves of his dear ones.

Another highly commendable custom is the practice of contributing to charitable causes on the day before Rosh Hashanah (O.H. 581:4 in Rama). Today, with organized philanthropies working all year round, the custom has continued and is applied to charities beyond those for which one is approached by organized bodies.

The practice of sending greeting cards to friends wishing them a happy new year is also commendable. Originally it was customary to wish each one that he be inscribed in the Book of Life (O.H. 582:9 in Rama). The circle was later widened by sending such greetings by mail to all friends.

If Rosh Hashanah falls on Thursday and Friday, an 'eruv tavshilin should be made, as in the case of the other festivals, so that one may cook for the Sabbath on the second day.

5. Rosh Hashanah

"On Rosh Hashanah all the inhabitants of the world pass before Him [in judgment] like a flock of sheep" (M. R.H. 1:2).

"All are judged on Rosh Hashanah, and the verdict is sealed on Yom Kippur" (Tosefta, R.H. 1:12).

"Rabbi Kruspedai said in the name of Rabbi Yohanan: 'Three books are opened on Rosh Hashanah, one for the utterly wicked, one for the perfectly righteous, and one for the intermediates. The perfectly righteous are straightaway inscribed and sealed for life; the wicked are straightaway inscribed and sealed for death; the intermediates are suspended and wait from Rosh Hashanah until Yom Kippur. If they merit, they are inscribed for life; if not--they are inscribed for death'" (B. R.H. 16b).

These passages make it apparent that in talmudic times, Rosh Hashanah had already developed into a day of reflection, repentance, and judgment. Whereas in the case of Yom Kippur the Bible tells us: "For on this day shall atonement be made for you to cleanse you; from all your sins shall you be clean before, the Lord" (Lev. 16,30), in the case of Rosh Hashanah there is no mention that it is a New Year festival or that it is a day of judgment, but only that it is a yom teru'ah or zikhron teru'ah (Num. 29: 1, Lev. 23:24). The name Rosh Hashanah occurs for the first time in the Mishnah. (The one place where it is mentioned in the Bible--Ezekiel 40:1--refers to Yom Kippur, which comes at the beginning of the year.)

The festival was also known as Yom Hadin and Yom Hazikaron. Each of these names conveys one of the characteristics of Rosh Hashanah, but the name Rosh Hashanah has become prevalent. It is based on tradition that the creation of the world was finished on the first of Tishre (R.H. 11a). In the liturgy of the day the two themes, creation and judgment, are combined, hayom harat olam, hayom ya'amid bamishpat,. This is expanded in the central part of the services.

. . . zeh hayom t'hilat ma'asecha zikaron l'yom rishon
. . . v'al hamdinot bo yeamer aizo lacharev
...uvriot bo yipakedu l'hazkiram l'hayyim v'lamavet

From a day of judgment it is a natural step to a period of repentance. The call to repentance has come to be the major characteristic of Rosh Hashanah, and most of the prayers and rituals sound this theme.

As a day of judgment by God and repentance by man, Rosh Hashanah makes God the final arbiter of human destiny. "One interpretation of life, which western civilization has inherited from ancient Greek culture, is that human life is the inevitable working out of a dire doom from which there is no escape. Man may delude himself with the belief that he is free to make of his life what he will, but in actuality he is trapped by a destiny which is deaf to his most heart-rending appeals. The very antithesis of that is the version of life implied in the Jewish religion" (Kaplan, The Meaning of God, p. 64).

In the Jewish religion, man's place in "life is conceived not as the working out of a doom but as the fulfillment of a blessing! . . . Evil is an interference; it is not Fate. Man is not trapped; he is tested. 'The die is cut,' says the occidental man; and the Jewish religion retorts, 'But the final issue is with God'" (ibid., pp. 67-68).

Professor Heschel writes: "Man in quest for an anchor in ultimate meaning is far from being a person shipwrecked who dreams of a palace while napping on the edge of an abyss. He is a person in full mastery of his ship who has lost his direction because he failed to remember his destination. Man in his anxiety is a messenger who forgot the message" (Who Is Man?, pp. 118f.).

Rosh Hashanah, then, is not an opportunity for mirth. The rejoicing associated with the festival stems from the awareness that life always holds out the promise of better things. Principally, however, it is an occasion for self-examination, a veritable Yom Hadin and Yom Hazikaron, a time when there comes before God "the remembrance of every creature . . . man's deeds and destiny, his works and ways, his thoughts and designs and the workings of his imagination." It is not only God who judges our actions; we also are called to judge our own actions and thus find our direction am. Similarly Yom Hazikaron calls us to remember not only great events in the dim past but also incidents in the journey we have made since the year began (Vainstein, Cycle of the Jewish Year, p. 97). All this has one main purpose--a call to repentance.

Unit XVI:

The Minor Festivals

Chanukkah

The Observance of Chanukkah

Chanukkah Services

Purim

The Observance of Purim

Shushan Purim

Purim Services

Purim Customs

XVI: Minor Festivals

1. Introduction

In addition to the major festivals that are prescribed in the Torah, there are several minor festivals of later origin. Since these do not have the sanctity of the major festivals, work is permitted. They are marked by special observances in the synagogue and home, and their meaning is elaborated by additions to the morning and evening liturgy. Chief among these minor festivals are Hanukkah and Purim. Both commemorate great deliverances of the Jewish people.

1. Hanukkah

"Now on the five and twentieth day of the ninth month, which is called the month of Kislev, in the hundred forty and eighth year, they rose up in the morning, and offered sacrifice according to the law upon the new altar of burnt offerings, which they had made. At the very season and on the very day that the Gentiles had profaned it, it was dedicated with songs, citherns, harps, and cymbals.... And so they kept the dedication of the altar eight days.... Moreover Judah and his brethren, with the whole congregation of Israel, ordained that the days of the dedication of the altar should be kept in their season from year to year for eight days, from the five and twentieth day of the month Kislev, with mirth and gladness" (I Macc. 4:52-59).

"What is Hanukkah? For the rabbis have taught: Commencing with the twenty-fifth day of the month of Kislev there are eight days upon which there shall be neither mourning nor fasting. For when the Greeks entered the Temple, they defiled all the oil that was there. It was when the might of the Hasmonean dynasty overcame and vanquished them that, upon search, only a single cruse of undefiled oil, sealed by the High Priest, was found. In it was oil enough for the needs of a single day. A miracle was wrought and it burned eight days. The next year they ordained these days a holiday with songs and praises" (B. Shab. 21b: for variations of the story, see *Pesiqta Rabbati*, ed. Meir Ish Shalom, p. 5a; *Megilat Ta'anit*, ed. Lichtenstein, P. 341).

These passages represent the two strands within the Jewish tradition regarding Hanukkah and its meaning, the one preserved in the Apocrypha, in First and Second Maccabees, and the other in the Talmud.

In the apocryphal books, the story of the people of Israel during the Hellenistic period places special stress on the battles and victories of the Hasmonean (Maccabee) family. The war fought by the Hasmoneans is given a religious meaning; it was a struggle against the suppression of Judaism, culminating in the purification and rededication of the Temple of Jerusalem. The rededication took eight days; hence the eight days of Hanukkah.

The Talmudic tradition, on the other hand, stresses the miracle of the cruse of oil and mentions the Hasmonean struggle only cursorily. It is remarkable that while the Talmud contains an entire tractate devoted to Purim, Hanukkah is not even mentioned in the Mishnah, (but see [site editor's note](#)) The talmudic discussion begins with the question ma'ee chanukah ("What is Hanukkah?"), as if the answer were not very well known.

The early authorities sensed that the Hasmonean victories had already lost their luster by the mishnaic period. Abudraham claims that while the Hasmoneans were initially pious, they sinned by making themselves the rulers of the Jewish state, an office not to be assumed by a priestly family, As Kohanim, the Hasmoneans had no right to take the royal scepter into their hands. Their punishment for this crime was eventually inflicted by Herod, who exterminated virtually all the Hasmoneans who were alive during his reign (Abudraham Hashalem, p. 201).

Rabbi Moses Sofer sees Rabbi Yehudah Hanassi as responsible for the omission of Hanukkah from the Mishnah, He says that Yehudah Hanassi, who claimed to be a direct descendant of King David, regarded the Hasmoneans as usurpers since they were not members of the Davidic dynasty (Rabinowitz, *Hol Umo'ed*, p. 65). It has been suggested that there was also a political reason for the fact that the Maccabees are not mentioned in the Mishnah. The Romans, who dominated Judaea during the period when the Mishnah was compiled, would have interpreted any emphasis on a Jewish war of independence as a sign of rebelliousness and this might have had dire consequences for the entire community (see Kahana, *Sifrut Hahistoriah Hayisra'elit*, 1:61).

It is apparent that the Hasmonean dynasty had lost its glory by the time of the Mishnah, for the last of the Hasmoneans were guilty of the very things their forebears fought against; as a result, Hanukkah was well-nigh forgotten (Kahana. loc. cit.). In time the festival was reestablished, but now the stress was on the miracles that accompanied the rededication of the Temple, not on the victories of the Maccabees. Hence, when the Talmud asked ma'ee chanukah the answer did not pertain to the Maccabean victories and rededication of the Temple, but rather to the miracle of the cruse of oil (B. Shab. 21a.)

The talmudic tradition has obtained to our own day. The message of Hanukkah is expressed in the prophetic words of the Haftarah of the Sabbath of Hanukkah: "Not by might, nor by power, but by My spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts" (Zech. 4:6). In this spirit Dr. Kaplan says: "The striking feature of the celebration of Hanukkah is the fact that, although the occasion which it commemorates was incidental to a successful war of independence fought against an oppressive foreign ruler, that occasion itself was neither a victory on the field of battle nor a political transaction that gave official recognition to the hard-won independence of Judaea. Hanukkah commemorates the rededication of the Temple at Jerusalem to the God of Israel after it had been deliberately defiled by the Grecian rulers" (Kaplan, *The Meaning of God*, p. 330).

With the rise of Jewish nationalism, Hanukkah assumed a new importance; again the stress was shifted, this time back to the wars for political independence. The celebrations that heretofore were conducted at home and in the synagogue took the form of public demonstrations. The heroism of the Maccabees in liberating their country from foreign domination became a source of inspiration for nationalist endeavors (see Sefer Hamo'adim, Hanukkah, pp. 189-91, article by Joseph Klausner; Schauss, The Jewish Festivals, p. 230; Waxman, Handbook of Judaism, p. 73; Wahrman, Hagei Yisra'el Umo'adaw, p. 98).

This stress on the Maccabean struggle for independence reached its peak in Israel, where Hanukkah has become a patriotic celebration.

In America the proximity of a Christian holiday, and its prominence on the secular calendar, has influenced the celebration of Hanukkah both positively and negatively. The positive influence expresses itself in the greater and more widespread observance of Hanukkah, Negatively, Hanukkah has become more important to many American Jews than some of the major festivals on the Jewish calendar and is celebrated more and more lavishly in order to compete with the celebration of the non-Jewish holiday.

Note: In fact, the festival is mentioned several times in the Mishnah. For instance, Taanit 2:10 and Moed Katan 3:9 list it as a day on which mourning is forbidden. Bava Kama 6:6 recognizes that most people would light candles outside their homes, with a possible fire hazard resulting. Megillah 3-4 lists the Torah readings for the holiday. Perhaps what Klein means to say is that there is no tractate devoted specifically to Hannukah, and only passing mention of its distinctive Mitzvot. (Rabbi Joshua Heller)

2. The Observance of Hanukkah

Hanukkah begins on the eve of the twenty-fifth day of Kislev and lasts eight days. Work is permitted during the eight days, but all signs of sadness are to be avoided. There is no fasting, and at funerals eulogies and tziduk hadin are omitted (O.H. 670:1; Rama on O.H. 683:1).

Hanukkah is marked by the kindling of lights at home and in the synagogue (hence it is also called chag haurim, the Festival of Lights). If oil is used for the Hanukkah lights, olive oil is preferred (O.H. 673:1). If candles are used, wax candles are preferred. The weight of rabbinic opinion opposes the use of an electric Menorah (She'arim Metsuyanim Bahalakhah, 3:240 f., quotes Levush Mordekhai, Or Zar'ua, Pequdat El'azan, Bet Yitshaq, see also Rabbi Y. E. Henkin in 'Edut Leyisra'el, p. 122; Mishpetei Uzi'el, 1:25). In addition to the reasons cited in these sources, it should be noted that the use of candles or oil has great esthetic appeal and more sentimental meaning.

One light is kindled on the first night of Hanukkah; an additional light is added each succeeding night, so that eight lights are kindled on the eighth night (O.H. 671:2). The lights should be kindled after sundown (O.H. 672:1), Three benedictions are recited

before the kindling of the lights on the first night: lehadlik ner shel hanukkah, sheasah nasim la'avoteinu bayamim hahem bazmal hazeh, and shehechyanu v'kiyemany v'higianu lazmal hazeh (O.H. 676:1); the first two are also recited on each of the seven subsequent nights, but shehechyanu is not (O.H. 676:1).

The first candle is placed on the right side of the Menorah. The second candle (on the second night) is placed directly to the left of the place occupied by the first candle, and so on, always moving leftward. The kindling starts on the left and moves toward the right. Thus the first candle to be lit each day is the candle added for that day (O.H. 676:5). hanerot halalu, is sung while kindling the lights, followed by maot tzur; (O.H. 676:4). The Menorah should be placed where it is visible from outside the house in order to proclaim the miracle of Hanukkah to all passers-by--l'farsumei nisah (O.H. 671:5, B. Shab. 24a).

In addition to the candles that are lit for each day, there is a special candle known as the shamash. This extra candle is necessary because the Hanukkah lights themselves should not be used for kindling other lights--hanerot halalu kodesh hem v'ei lanu reshut lehishtamesh bahem. The shamash is added, therefore, to be used in lighting the other candles and to provide illumination, it remains lit with the others (O.H. 673: 1).

Hanukkah lights are lit in the synagogue as well as in the home, and the same laws apply. They are lit immediately before Ma'ariv (O.H. 671:7). Since the main idea is l'farsumei nisah, this is not a substitute for kindling the lights at home (ibid.).

For the same reason, it is customary to light candles in the synagogue before Shaharit each morning, but without the accompanying benediction (Ziv Haminhagim, p, 263, no. 26). This also serves as a reminder of how many candles must be lit in the evening (see Eisenstein, Otsar Dinim Uminhagim, p, 141).

On Friday night the Hanukkah lights are lit before the Sabbath candles (O.H. 678:1). Opinions differ regarding whether the Hanukkah candles should be lit before or after Havdalah in the synagogue (O.H. 681:2 and M.D. ad loc.). Our custom is to light before Havdalah (see Hayyei Adam 153:37; Qitsur Shulhan 'Arukh 139:18),

3. Hanukkah Services

In the liturgy al hanisim is added before v'al kulam and in Birkat Hamazon before v'al hakol (O.H. 682:1). Tahanun is not recited on Hanukkah, beginning with Minhah on the eve of Hanukkah (O.H. 683:1). Complete Hallel is recited every morning after the 'Amidah (O.H. 683:1 in Rama). Since there is no Musaf on Hanukkah, and Hallel is thus not the end of the Shaharit service, only half-Qaddish is recited after Hallel (see Ziv Haminhagim, p. 263, no. 26, Abudraham Hashalem, p. 202). The complete Hallel is recited each day of Hanukkah because each day has its own individuality, as marked by the addition of a candle (Abudraham Hashalem, p. 202).

The Torah is read every morning and three people are called to the reading. The reading is from the Sidrah naso (Num. 7); it is known as parashat nesi'im because it tells of the gifts the princes of Israel brought at the dedication of the Tabernacle in the wilderness.

On the first day the reading starts at the beginning of the chapter (the Sefardim start three verses earlier, with the Birkat Kohanim) and ends with verse 17 (O.H. 684:1).

There are variations in the manner in which the portion is divided into 'aliyot. According to one custom, we read up to bayom harishon for Kohen, the first three verses of the next passage for Levi, and the last three verses for Shelishi. According to the other custom, the passage beginning with bayom harishon is kept intact for Shelishi, and the first passage is divided between Kohen and Levi, the first four verses being read for Kohen, and the rest for Levi (O.H. 684:1). The Rabbinical Assembly Weekly Prayer Book follows the latter custom.

On the second day the portion begins with verse 18--bayom hasheni--which describes the offering of the second day. The first three verses are read for Kohen, the second three verses for Levi (O.H. 684: 1), and the entire passage of bayom hashlishi for Shelishi (Rama on O.H. 684: 1).

The same order is followed each day except the sixth, which is also Rosh Hodesh Tevet (O.H. 684:3), the day or days of Hannukah that fall on a Sabbath, and the last day of Hanukkah, when we begin with bayom hashmini and complete the chapter up to and including the offering of the twelfth day, and the concluding passage beginning with zot chanukat hamizbeach (O.H. 684: 1). Because of the reading of this passage, the eighth day of Hanukkah is sometimes called zot chanukat.

On the last day the reading begins with bayom hashmini. The paragraph is divided as on the other days: the first three verses for Kohen, the next three for Levi, and from bayom hatishi'i through the end of the chapter for Shelishi.

On the sixth day, which is always Rosh Hodesh. two Torah scrolls are taken from the ark. In the first Torah scroll we read the portion prescribed for Rosh Hodesh (Num. 23:1-15), calling three people. In the second Torah scroll we read the prescribed portion for Hanukkah, bayom hashishi, calling one person (O.H. 684:3). When Rosh Hodesh Tevet is observed for two days. the service follows the same procedure on the second day of Rosh Hodesh as on the first, except that the portion read from the second scroll begins with bayom hashvi'i.

On the Sabbath two Torah scrolls are taken out. The Sidrah of the week is read from the first. The Maftir, which is the prescribed reading for that day of Hanukkah, is read from the second (O.H. 684:2). The Haftarah is Zechariah 2:14-4:4. It was chosen because it mentions the Menorah and also because it contains the verse "Not by might, nor by power, etc.," which has become the motto of Hanukkah.

Since Hanukkah lasts eight days, it will have two Sabbaths if the first day of the festival is a Sabbath, In such a case, we follow the same procedure on the second Sabbath as on the first, except that the Haftarah is from I Kings 7:40-50. This passage has a description of the furnishings of the Temple of Solomon, an appropriate reading on a holiday that celebrates the rededication of the Second Temple.

If Rosh Hodesh and the Sabbath coincide, three Torah scrolls are taken out, The Sidrah of the week is read from the first, and six people are given 'aliyot, The passage for Rosh Hodesh (Num. 28:9-15) is read from the second for the seventh aliyah. The Qaddish is then recited. The prescribed reading for the sixth day of Hanukkah is read from the third, The Haftarah is that of Hanukkah (O.H. 684:3). The services for the day incorporate the special prayers of both Hanukkah and Rosh Hodesh; i.e., complete Hallel, the Musaf 'Amidah of Rosh Hodesh and al hanisim in each 'Amidah (O.H. 682:2). On the Sabbath of Hanukkah av harachaman and tzidkatcha tzedek are omitted (Rama on O.H. 683:1) since they are omitted on any Sabbath on which, were it a weekday, Tahanun would not be said (O,H. 292:2).

Many festive customs are associated with Hanukkah, special games (dreidl) and special foods (latkes or pancakes) are characteristic of the holiday. In America Hanukkah has become an occasion for the exchanging of gifts, especially for children (Ziv Haminhagim, pp. 262-63, nos. 24, 25). Plays and celebrations are held in religious schools. At home there is special emphasis on the children's participation in the lighting of the candles (O.H. 675:3). The festival thus recalls to us a great act of faith, commemorating the liberation of our people bayamim hahem bazman hazeh, "in those days, at this season." Hanukkah symbolizes the struggle, of "the few against the many, the weak against the strong," the eternal battle of the Jewish people for its faith and its existence. To the world it proclaims the eternal message of the prophet Zechariah: "Not by might, nor by Power, but by My spirit."

4. Purim

"The Jews ordained and took upon themselves and upon their descendants... that these days of Purim should not cease from among the Jews, nor the memory of them perish from among their descendants... to observe these days of Purim at their appointed time" (Esther 9:27-31).

The festival of Purim is based on the story in the Book of Esther. While scholars have had difficulty in identifying the time and the characters of the story, there is no doubt that Jewish tradition and the Jewish people have accepted the event as authentic, and the celebration of Purim as based on a firm foundation. Unlike Hanukkah, which is post-biblical and is not even mentioned in the Mishnah, Purim is based on a book of the Bible; a tractate of the Mishnah and Talmud is devoted to it as well.

Purim attained great popularity because it reflected the perennial problem of the Jewish people--animosity against the Jew. Haman's accusation--"There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the peoples..." (Esther 3:8)--has been repeated in every age. The celebration of Purim serves to strengthen our people, enabling them to face such accusations with dignity and courage, and inspiring them with the hope of final victory over their enemies.

Elaborating on this point Professor Kaplan says: "Out of the reaction of the Jews in the past to their status as a minority everywhere in the Diaspora there evolved a remarkable philosophy of life or system of spiritual values. It is remarkable not only for its influence in sustaining the courage of the Jew in desperate situations, but for its inherent worth. Being in the minority, Jews were expected to accept the life-pattern of a conquered people. They were expected to adopt the standards imposed on them by the majority, with good grace, if they could, or with sullen resentment, if they must. They did neither. Instead they formulated a philosophy of life which prevented the conquest from being consummated" (The Meaning of God, p. 363).

The corollary of this is not that we face hatred with faith and courage, but rather that we find meaning in the minority status that so often makes us the target for the slings and arrows of our enemies. "It is therefore necessary," says Professor Kaplan, "as it is appropriate, to make of the Feast of Purim, and of the special Sabbath preceding it, an occasion for considering anew the difficulties that inhere in our position as 'a people scattered and dispersed among the nations.' It is important that Jews know the nature of these difficulties in order that they may the better equip themselves to meet them. Those days should make Jews conscious of the spiritual values which their position as a minority group everywhere in the diaspora should lead them to evolve, and of the dangers which they must be prepared to overcome, if they expect to survive as a minority group" (ibid., pp. 361-62).

It is perhaps for this reason that the rabbis said that even when all the other festivals are abolished, Purim will remain (Midrash Mishle 9:2).

5. The Observance of Purim

The Sabbath preceding Purim is called Shabbat Zachor, the Sabbath of Remembrance. It is one of the arba parshiot preceding Pesach, discussed in unit 7 in connection with Pesach. Its association with Purim is based on the tradition that Haman was a descendant of the tribe of Amalek. Furthermore, Amalek and Haman had in common the desire to annihilate the Jewish people, and both were frustrated in their designs.

The day before Purim, the thirteenth of Adar, is a fast day. If Purim is on a Sunday, the fast day is observed on the preceding Thursday (O.H. 686:2).

The four statutory public fasts will be discussed later (see next unit). They are observed in memory of the tragic events connected with the destruction of Jerusalem and the loss of the Jewish state. The Fast of Esther is a statutory public fast of a similar nature, but it is connected with another calamity that threatened the existence of the Jewish people. The precedent for this fast is found in the Book of Esther. When Mordecai informed Esther of Haman's plans, she asked him to proclaim a three-day fast (Esther 4:16). It is in memory of this that we fast on the day before Purim (O.H. 686:1).

Noting that the fast proclaimed by Esther was not on the thirteenth of Adar, some authorities offer a different explanation. When the children of Israel gathered together on the thirteenth of Adar to defend themselves against their enemies, they were in a state of war, and preparations for war always included a public fast (see O.H. 686 in Mishnah Berurah 2; Ziv Haminhagim, p. 275, no. 7).

A modern commentator suggests that the Jews fasted on the thirteenth of Adar because they were so occupied with defending themselves that they had no opportunity to eat (Rabinowitz, *Hol Umo'ed*, p. 72; Munk, *World of Prayer*, 2:311).

Since the fast of the thirteenth of Adar is not explicitly mentioned in the Bible, the rabbis were lenient about its observance (O.H. 686:7 in Rama; Ziv Haminhagim, p. 275).

The primary observance connected with Purim is the reading of the Book of Esther, usually called the megilla (Scroll). It is read twice: in the evening, after the 'Amidah of Ma'ariv and before alenu; and in the morning after the Torah reading (B. Meg. 4a; O.H. 687:1).

The Megillah is read from a parchment scroll that is written the same way a Torah is written--i.e., by hand, and with a goose quill (O.H. 690:3). If there is no such scroll available, the congregation may read the Book of Esther from a printed text, without the accompanying benedictions.

The Megillah is chanted according to a special cantillation used only in the reading of the Book of Esther, If no one is present who knows this cantillation, it may be read without the cantillation, as long as it is read correctly (Qitsur Shulhan 'Arukh 141:18). It may be read in the language of the land (O.H. 690:9). In practice, however, reading the Megillah in any but the original language is to be avoided ('Arukh Hashulhan, O.H. 690:16). Today in particular, when we seek to emphasize the use of the sacred tongue whenever possible, we should not encourage any deviation from the prevailing practice.

Before the reading, the scroll is unrolled and folded to look like a letter of dispatch, thus further recalling the story of the great deliverance (Maimonides, Hil. Megillah 2:12). The reading is preceded by three benedictions and followed by one (O.H. 692:1). The three before the reading are sheasa nesim, al mekra megila, and shehechianu. The benediction following the reading is harav et revnu.

The Megillah must be read standing and from the scroll, not by heart (O.H. 690:1, 7). During the reading four verses, termed "verses of redemption" (pesuke g'ula), are said aloud by the congregation and then repeated by the reader. The verses enumerating the ten sons of Haman (Esther 9:7-10) are said in one breath to signify that they died together (B. Meg. 16b). Another reason has also been suggested: We should avoid the appearance of gloating over their fate, even though it was deserved (Vainstein, Cycle of the Jewish Year, p. 135).

It is a widespread Purim custom for the listeners at the Megillah reading to make noise, usually with special noisemakers called graggers, whenever Haman's name is mentioned. This is an outgrowth of a custom once prevalent in France and the Provence, where the children wrote the name on smooth stones, then struck them together whenever Haman was mentioned in the reading so as to rub it off, as suggested by the verse, "the name of the wicked shall rot" (Prov. 10:7; Abudraham Hashalem, p. 209; O.H. 690:17 in Rama). In some places this practice is discouraged because it makes it difficult for worshippers to hear the reader (ibid. and also in Mishnah Berurah, n. 59 and n. 57 thereto of Sha'ar Hatsiyun).

The Megillah should be read in the synagogue in the presence of a minyan. If a minyan is not available it may be read even for one individual (O.H. 690:18). Those who cannot attend services in the synagogue may read the Megillah at home (Rama on O.H. 690:18).

6. Shushan Purim

"But the Jews that were in Shushan assembled together on the thirteenth day thereof, and on the fourteenth thereof; and on the fifteenth day of the same they rested, and made it a day of feasting and gladness. Therefore do the Jews of the villages, that dwell in the unwalled towns, make the fourteenth day of the month of Adar a day of gladness and feasting" (Esther 9:18-19).

From these verses the sages derived the view that Purim was celebrated on the fifteenth of Adar, as in Shushan, in cities that had been walled since the days of Joshua (M. Meg. 1:1; O.H. 688:4 and in M.A. 4). In the towns of the Ashkenazic diaspora this is academic because there are no cities that ancient (Levush, O.H. 688:4). In Jerusalem, however, Purim is observed on the fifteenth of Adar. There are also cities which are in a doubtful category, such as Jaffa, Safed, Akko, Tiberias, and Lydda; in these the Megillah is read on both the fourteenth and the fifteenth of Adar. On the fifteenth it is read only at night and without the accompanying benedictions (Shanah Beshanah 5727, p. 59; O.H. 688:4).

7. Purim Services

The services on Purim are the same as on other weekdays except for the following variations, al hanesim is added before v'al kulam in the 'Amidah and before v'al hakol, in

the Birkat Hamazon (O.H. 693:2, 3); Tahanun is not said at Minhah the night before, in the morning, or in the evening (O.H. 693:3, 697:1); lam'natseach is also omitted (O.H. 693:3).

The Torah is read in the morning, with three people given 'aliyot. The reading is from Exodus 17:8-16, beginning with v'yavo Amalek (O.H. 693:4).

The rabbis sought to understand why Hallel is not recited on Purim (O.H. 693:3). The Talmud explains that the redemption represented by Purim was not complete. True, the Jews were saved from the annihilation plotted by Haman, but they still remained subject to Ahasuerus (B. Meg. 14a), whereas after the redemption commemorated by Pesach they ceased to be subjects of Pharaoh, and after Hanukkah they were no longer subject to Antiochus (Levush, O.H. 693:3; O.H. in M.D. 2). Moreover, the reading of the Megillah performs the function of Hallel (Levush, O.H. 693:3). The Talmud also explains that Hallel is not said for events that took place outside the land of Israel (B. Meg. 14a).

Shushan Purim is celebrated as a semi-holiday; Tahanun is not said, and one should not fast, give a eulogy, or say tseduk hadeen (O.H. 696:3, 697:1).

During a leap year, it is the usual practice to do all things that must be done during the month of Adar during First Adar, in conformity with the principle that "one must not pass by precepts" (B. Pes. 64b). Purim, however, is celebrated only during Second Adar (M. Meg. 1:4). The Talmud suggests that since Purim and Pesach both celebrate the deliverance of Israel, they should occur close to one another (Levush, O.H. 697). First Adar is not neglected completely, however. On the fourteenth and fifteenth of First Adar, Tahanun is omitted, no eulogy is said, and fasting is not permitted (B. Meg. 6b; O.H. 697:1). It is therefore called Purim katan ('Arukh Hashulhan, O.H. 697:2).

Opinions differ as to whether a person who is sitting Shiv'ah should continue to observe Shiv'ah on Purim (O.H. 696:4). The prevalent practice is for mourners to come to the synagogue, sit on a regular chair, and wear their shoes. As on the Sabbath, however, they should observe d'varim shebtsenah, and the day of Purim counts as one of the days of Shiv'ah (Rama on O.H. 696:4; Hayyei Adam 154:36).

There is also a difference of opinion regarding weddings on Purim. Some authorities oppose them on the principle of ein m'arvin smcha b'semcha, "we do not mix one joyous occasion with another," (B. Mo'ed Qatan 8b, 9a; O.H. 696:8 in M.A. n. 18; 'Arukh Hashulhan 696:12; Maharam Schick, O.H. 345). Others permit them (O.H. 696:8 in Sha'arei Teshuvah, n. 12; Tur, O.H. 698 in Belt Yosefand Hayyei Adam 154:39). The weight of opinion is with the latter position.

8. Purim Customs

"And Mordecai wrote these things, and sent letters unto all the Jews that were in all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus both nigh and far, to enjoin them that they should keep the fourteenth day of the month of Adar, and the fifteenth day of the same, the days wherein the Jews had rest from their enemies, and the month which was turned unto them from sorrow to gladness and from mourning unto a good day; that they should make them days of feasting and gladness, and of sending portions one to another and gifts to the poor" (Esther 9:20-22).

This order by Mordecai provides the basis for all the practices ordained and adopted in connection with Purim, with the exception of the reading of the Megillah.

The "feasting and gladness" are expressed by the s'udat Purim, an especially festive meal held in the afternoon before sundown (O.H. 695:2). In order to heighten the joy at this meal, the rabbis even allowed an unusual amount of levity. Well known is the statement in the Talmud: "Rava said: A person should be so exhilarated [with drink] on Purim that he does not know the difference between 'cursed be Haman' and 'blessed be Mordecai'" (B. Meg. 7b). The later authorities tried hard to lessen the exuberance of this command. Since they could not condone intoxication, they suggested that the passage means that one may drink more than he does usually (O.H. 695:2 in Rama). It was also ingeniously suggested that the numerical values of "cursed be Haman" and "blessed be Mordecai" are the same; to be unable to discover this does not require a very high degree of intoxication. (See Abudraham Hashalem for other interpretations. The most rational is the one quoted from Ba'al Haminhagot. According to him, there were responsive readings where the responses to the reader were "cursed be Haman" and "blessed be Mordecai." Naturally it was necessary to know when the one was called for, and when the other. Again, one did not have to be highly intoxicated to confuse the responses.)

The permissiveness in regard to imbibing on Purim was explained on the ground that imbibing was very much involved in the story of Purim. Vashti fell from grace when "the heart of the king was merry with wine" (Esther 1:10), which resulted in Esther becoming the queen. When Esther became queen there was a similar banquet (Esther 2:18). Haman's downfall started with the drinking of wine (Esther 7:1, 2; O.H. 695:2 in M. D., note 1).

It was customary in Eastern Europe for youngsters at the s'udat Purim to be disguised in costumes and to sing humorous Purim songs or render humorous dramatic recitations, usually of their own composition. Each country and each generation, dating back to talmudic times (B. San. 64b), had its own form of merrymaking.

In European countries, where a carnival with parades, pantomimes, and masquerades took place at about the same season of the year, the celebration of Purim was influenced by the customs of the environment. Consequently, on this day plays were produced representing scenes from the events related in the Megillah, and at times also from other biblical stories. The amateur players were known as Purim Shpielers (Waxman, Judaism, p. 74). Sometimes women were dressed in the garb of men, and vice versa. This would normally have been forbidden, but it was permitted in the case of Purim since the object was merrymaking (Responsa of R. Yehudah Mintz, 16, quoted in Mateh Mosheh 1014; also O.H. 696:8 in Rama; see also Maimon, Hagim Umo'adim, pp. 121-23).

In America, not counting the reading of the Megillah, the celebration of Purim found its widest expression in the religious schools. It is in the schools that we have Purim plays, carnivals, masquerade contests, and Queen Esther crownings. Some adult organizations also have Purim masquerade balls and parties.

In Israel, Purim, like Hanukkah, has experienced a great revival, with emphasis on the national theme. One specific innovation is the adlayada. It is an elaborate, well-organized parade with floats, bands, marchers, costumes, and dancing in the streets and squares of the city (Wahrman, Hagei Yisra'el Umo'adaw, p. 126).

Another practice is that of mishloach manot (O.H. 695:4). Families, especially the women, exchange gifts of foods and pastries.

The custom of giving gifts to the poor on Purim has become a casualty of our modern system of organized charities. In ages past, it was ordained that on Purim people were to be extra generous, giving to all who asked without question (O.H. 694:1, 3). It is still customary in many congregations to put collection plates on a table in the vestibule of the synagogue. The contributions are called machatzit hashekel money, in memory of the half-sheqel that was collected in ancient days around Purim-time for the upkeep of the Temple in Jerusalem.

The only special food for Purim is hamantashen, a three-cornered pastry filled with poppy seed (the original name was muntashen--mun being the Yiddish word for "poppyseeds"). In Hebrew this pastry is called azne haman, based on the older name Haman Ohren or, in Italian, Orrechi d'Aman (Jewish Encyclopedia, s.v. "Purim"). In old illustrations Haman is pictured wearing a three-cornered hat, and this may have given rise to the three-cornered pastry.

The many community and family Purims of Jewish history are a unique development connected with Purim. These private holidays were instituted to commemorate great deliverances experienced by individual communities or families. They were celebrated with festivities, and often with the reading of a scroll telling the story of the deliverance (for examples of these scrolls, see Ginsburger, "Deux Pourims Locaux"; on local Purims,

see Roth, "Some Revolutionary Purims," and "Supplement," Jewish Encyclopedia, s.v. "Purim"; Hagim Umo'adim, p. 161).

The festival of Purim offers Jews a powerful lesson, teaching them not to despair even when dangers are most threatening and persecution most cruel. Its festivities cheered the Jew in his darkest moments and assured him that deliverance was at hand. No wonder that the sages took literally the Book of Esther's promise that "these days of Purim shall not disappear from among the Jews, nor the memory of them perish from their descendants" (9:28), and therefore said: "All the festivals will cease, but the days of Purim will not cease" (Midrash Mishle 9; see also P. Meg. 1:6).

Unit XXI:

The Dietary Laws

Introduction

Permitted Creatures and Animals

Clean and Unclean Fowl

Fish

Insects and Reptiles

Cheeses and Wines

Shechitah

The Knife

XXI: The Dietary Laws (I) Shechitah

I: Introduction

The dietary laws loom large in Jewish life. They are referred to many times in the Torah apart from the full chapter devoted to them in Leviticus (Lev. 11) and part of a chapter in Deuteronomy (Deut. 14:4-21). They are elaborated in the Talmud in a large treatise, Hullin, which deals with them almost exclusively. In the post-talmudic literature, they are discussed in every code, the Tur and the Shulhan Arukh both devoting over a third of one section, Yoreh De'ah, to this codification.

Efforts have been made to give a rationale for the dietary laws. The most persistent--hailing back to Maimonides (Guide 3:48)--is that they were originally hygienic measures. Thus, Maimonides says: "I maintain that the food forbidden by the law is unwholesome. There is nothing among the forbidden foods whose injurious character is doubted except pork and fat. But also in these cases is the doubt unjustified" (Guide 3:48). Today, this explanation is often given by those who wish to discard the dietary laws on the grounds that we can achieve the same health measures by other means.

The inadequacy of the medical rationale was pointed out by Isaac Abarbanel: "God forbid that I should believe that the reason for forbidden foods is medicinal! For were it so, the Book of God's Law would be in the same class as any of the minor brief medical books Furthermore, our own eyes see that people who eat pork and insects and such., are well and alive and healthy at this very day Moreover, there are more dangerous animals., which are not mentioned at all in the list of prohibited ones. And there are many poisonous herbs known to physicians which the Torah does not mention at all. All of which points to the conclusion that the Law of God did not come to heal bodies and seek their material welfare but to seek the health of the soul and cure its illness" (Abarbanel on Leviticus, quoted in Cohn, Royal Table, p. 17).

The sources, the Bible in particular, never mention such reasons. Rather, it is usually suggested that the laws have some connection with holiness. Thus we read in Leviticus: "I am the Lord your God; sanctify yourself, and be holy; for I am holy For I am the Lord that brought you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God; ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy" (Lev. 11:44-45). This is repeated in Deuteronomy: "for thou art a holy people unto the Lord thy God" (Deut, 14:21).

The Torah regards the dietary laws as a discipline in holiness, a spiritual discipline imposed on a biological activity. The tension between wanton physical appetites and the endeavors of the spirit was traditionally explained as the struggle between yetzer hatov, the good inclination, and yetzer hara, the evil inclination--the two forces that contend with each other for mastery of the soul.

To transpose this into a modern key, it is the struggle between our higher self and our lower self, between the animal in us and the urge to strive upwards, which is part of the process of evolution. The arena of struggle in this evolutionary process is biological. All these appetites remain in the realm of the physical. Religion strives to lift them out of the merely physical into the realm of the spirit.

To illustrate: Eating is one of the important functions of life. It begins as a biological act, a means of satisfying hunger. When we invite a friend for dinner, a new dimension is added to eating: it becomes a social act. It helps to cement friendship. When a meal takes place in connection with simcha shel mitzvah, the joy of observance of a commandment, it becomes a solemn act that helps add significance to an occasion. On the Sabbath, or even more, on Pesach at the seder, eating becomes a religious act, an act of worship, with the table becoming an altar of God.

Religion thus raises the biological act into the dimension of the holy. Hence the connection in the Torah between the dietary laws and holiness.

Rabbi Samuel H. Dresner suggests that the dietary laws have as their purpose the teaching of reverence for life. He says: "Human consumption of meat, which means the taking of animal life, has constantly posed a religious problem to Judaism, even when it has accepted the necessity of it. The Rabbis of the Talmud were aware of the distinction between man's ideal and his real condition, regarding food" (Dresner and Siegel, *Jewish Dietary Laws*, p. 24). Since it was felt that man must eat meat, the act was surrounded with regulations which would prevent him from being brutalized and instead would cause him to develop reverence for life. Rabbi Dreariar continues: "We are permitted to eat meat, but we must learn to have reverence for the life we take. It is part of the process of hallowing which Kashrut proclaims, Reverence for Life, teaching an awareness of what we are about when we engage in the simple act of eating flesh, is the constant lesson of the laws of Kashrut" (ibid., p. 27). This would explain the purpose of the dietary laws as a whole. There are additional reasons which apply to parts of the laws or to one specific practice. We shall mention them in the appropriate sections below.

2. Permitted Creatures and Animals

In Leviticus 11:2, the Torah enumerates the identifying marks of the animals we may and may not eat, and in Deuteronomy 14:4 it lists the names of the permitted animals; among the domesticated animals, these include cattle, sheep, goats (buffalo, yak), and among the undomesticated animals, the deer family, i.e., stag, moose, hart, elk (antelope, gazelle, eland).

In the case of beasts, i.e., undomesticated animals, the rabbis added a number of other distinguishing marks: forked horns or, failing that, horns that are circular in cross-

section, composed of layers rather than of solid bone, and with certain deep indentations near the base (B. Hul. 59a f.).

These distinguishing marks become necessary when it is not certain whether a particular species of beast is one of those enumerated in the Bible. No such identification is required for beasts that are listed in the Bible (Y.D. 80:2). Furthermore, certain laws that apply to cattle do not apply to beasts, and vice-versa. The fat of clean beasts, for example, may be eaten, while certain fats of cattle may not be eaten (B. Hul. 59b; Y.D. 80:1,5,6). Also, the blood resulting from the slaughter of beasts must be covered with earth or with something similar (Lev. 17:13).

3. Clean and Unclean Fowl

The Torah does not prescribe any identifying marks for birds; instead, it enumerates the species that are forbidden--a total of twenty-four according to the reckoning in the Talmud (B. Hul. 63b). The implication is that those not listed are permitted. The rabbis of the Talmud, however, deduced four distinguishing marks of birds that are permitted. A permitted bird has a crop; the sac in the gizzard can be peeled off; it has an extra toe--i.e., in addition to the three front toes, it has another toe in the back; it is not a bird of prey. According to one opinion, a bird that divides, its toes when it rests, i.e., two toes in front and two in the back, is not permitted (M. Hul 3:6).

Despite these identifying marks, it has become the accepted practice that only those birds that have been traditionally accepted as permitted may be eaten (Y.D. 82:3 in Rama). They are: chickens, turkeys, ducks, geese, and pigeons. Pheasants have been considered permitted in many places (Melamed Le'ho'il, vol. 2, no. 16, but see also Yad Halevi, Y.D. no. 39, which forbids it; for an up-to-date list, see Loewinger, "Of Tahor," pp, 258-77).

4. Fish

The fish that may be eaten are those that have fins and scales (Lev. 11:9-10; Deut. 14:9-10). The actual determining factor is scales because every fish that has scales has fins also--but the reverse is not true (Y.D. 83:3).

The scales should be removable by hand or with a scraping instrument without tearing the skin (Y.D. 83:1 in Rama). The scales need not be permanent; if the fish has scales during any stage of its life, and then sheds them, it is permitted (Y.D. 83:1). (For a list of permitted and forbidden fishes, see Dresner and Siegel, *Jewish Dietary Laws*; a slightly different list is given in *Kashruth: Handbook for Home and School*, published by the Union of Orthodox Congregations. Dresner and Siegel hold that swordfish and sturgeon are kosher; the authors of the UOC pamphlet classify them as unkosher. For a discussion of the reasons for permitting these fishes, see I. Klein, "Swordfish," and Grauhart,

"Sturgeon," in the archives of the Rabbinical Assembly Committee on Law and Standards.)

5. Insects and Reptiles

The Torah forbids creeping things (Lev. 11:20), but it enumerates several species of locusts that are permitted (Lev. 11:22). The Talmud lists the following distinguishing marks: "All that have four legs, four wings, leaping legs, and wings covering the greater part of the body, are clean. R. Jose says: It must also bear the name 'locust'." (M. Hul, 3:6).

Our brethren from Yemen claim to be expert at the identification of permitted locusts and have eaten them. In Western countries, the eating of locusts of any kind has traditionally been forbidden on the grounds that we are no longer able to distinguish between clean and unclean locusts (Y.D. 85:1 in Taz, sec. 1).

6. Cheeses and Wines

The controversy over the kashrut of cheeses is an old one, dating back to the time of the Talmud (M, A.Z. 2:4, 5; M. Hul. 8:5; B. Hul. 116b). Cheese is made from curdled milk. Since the curdling agent was rennet, which is extracted from the walls of a calf's stomach, Cheese was forbidden as a mixture of dairy and meat. According to some authorities, however, the use of rennet does not affect the kashrut of cheese because rennet no longer has the status of food and instead is comparable to a mere secretion. This controversy appears again and again among the posqim (see Rabbenu Tam in B. A.Z. 35a, s.v. Chada Katni; Maimonides, Hil. Ma'akhalot 'Asurot 4:13, 14, 19; Arukh Hashulhan. Y.D. 87:42). Some halakhic authorities demand a hekhsher for certain cheeses, implying that those without a hekhsher are not kosher; other authorities maintain that all cheeses are permissible and no hekhsher is necessary.

The Committee on Law and Standards of the Rabbinical Assembly has decided to follow the lenient opinion. First of all, it reasons, the fears expressed by those who require a hekhsher applied only in former times, when cheesemaking was a cottage industry and there was no way to control the ingredients used. Under these conditions, there was always the danger that an individual farmer who made cheese might use the milk of a nonkosher animal or might add lard to the mixture. Today however, at least in America, cheesemaking is a major industrial enterprise regulated by the Pure Food and Drug Law, which requires that most food products bear a label listing their ingredients.

Furthermore, the rennet used in many of the hard cheeses does not impair their kashrut, both for the talmudic reason stated above and also because the substance from which the rennet is extracted is thoroughly dried and treated with strong chemicals, and this process makes the rennet a new substance or comparable to a piece of wood. Thus, all cheeses that are subject to the Pure Food and Drug Act should be considered kosher

(see I. Klein, responsum on cheese in Law Committee Archives, and in Responsa and Halakhic Studies, pp. 43-58).

The permissibility of Yein nesekh (wines of the gentiles) is also a controversial subject. Yein nesekh was originally prohibited because it was used for libations in idol worship, and anything used in idol worship is forbidden to Jews. The rabbis considered this interdict to be a biblical commandment (see Dan. 1:5; B. A.Z. 29b; Maimonides, Sefer Hamitswot, no. 194; Y.D. 123-35).

In our day, however, there is no Yein nesekh since there is no longer any idol worship (B. A.Z. 57b in Tos., sv. Lafovki Midrov; Y.D. 123:1 in Rama). Rather, we are concerned nowadays with ordinary wines made or handled by gentiles. The Talmud forbids such wines as a precautionary measure to prevent socializing with gentiles since it might lead to intermarriage (B. A.Z. 31b) or because those who use such wines might be exposed to the religious influence of gentiles and thus be persuaded to apostatize. A hekhsher on wine, therefore, indicates that no gentiles were directly involved in any stage of the wine-making process (i.e., from the pressing of the grapes through the bottling and sealing of the wine).

At the request of the Committee on Law and Standards of the Rabbinical Assembly, Rabbi Israel Silverman made a study of the question and reported his findings in a responsum. Rabbi Silverman found that winemaking in the United States is fully automated (his study did not cover imported wines, many of which are not produced by automated processes), and no human hand comes in contact with the wine from the moment the grapes are put into containers and brought to the winery until the wine appears in sealed bottles. Wines manufactured by this automated process may not be classified as wines manufactured by gentiles and thus do not come under the interdict against the use of this wine.

Rabbi Silverman called attention to several additional considerations, however. Since it is a mitswah to support Israel, he suggested, we should give priority to wines imported from Israel, all of which are kosher according to the traditional standard, as indicated by the hekhsher they bear. Moreover, he deemed it advisable, for psychological reasons, that only wines with a hekhsher be used in religious ceremonies (e.g., for Qiddush or Havdalah). Similarly, on Pesach only wines marked Kosher Lepsach should be used.

The-committee accepted Rabbi Silverman's findings (see, however, the responsum of Rabbi Jacob Radin for an opposing opinion).

7. Shehitah

Those animals, beasts, and birds that are permitted must be slaughtered in a prescribed manner called Shehitah. Essentially this consists of a highly trained person (called a shohet, equipped with a special kind of knife, cutting both the windpipe (trachea) and

the food pipe (esophagus) in the case of animals, and at least one of these in the case of fowl.

The use of a special method of slaughtering has been explained as the fulfillment of the commandment of *tsair b'ali chaim*, prevention of cruelty to animals. Maimonides writes: "The commandment concerning the killing of animals is necessary because the natural food of man consists of vegetables and the flesh of animals; the best meat is that of animals permitted to be used as food. No doctor has any doubts about this. Since, therefore, the desire of procuring good food necessitates the slaying of animals, the law enjoins that the death of the animal should be the easiest. We are not permitted to torment the animal by cutting the throat in a clumsy manner, by pole-axing or by cutting off a limb while the animal is alive" (Guide 3:48; see also commentary of Nahmanides to Gen. 1:29 and comment of Sefer Hahinukh sec. 48 [Chavel ed., p. 564]). Modern science has borne out the claim that Shehitah is the most humane method of slaughter (see Dembo, *Jewish Method of Slaughter*. Berman, Shehitah. pp, 431 ff.).

The persistent efforts of some humane societies to promote anti-Shehitah laws on grounds of compassion for animals often has its source not in compassion for animals but rather in hostility to the children of Israel. The stubborn claim that Shehitah constitutes cruelty to animals ignores expert opinions to the contrary (see Lewin, Munk, and Berman. *Religious Freedom*, pp. 16, 121-66).

The most recent attacks have been leveled not against Shehitah itself but against the method of preparing the animal for Shehitah, which is called hoisting and shackling. While the sight of hoisting and shackling is not very edifying, the degree of pain and discomfort to the animal has been grossly exaggerated. Nevertheless, changes are being made through the introduction of a specially designed pen which puts the animal into position for Shehitah without any pain or discomfort (S, Rubenstein, *Kashruth*, pp. 12 ff.).

The question of stunning the animal before slaughter, either by electricity or by anesthesia, has been on the agenda for a number of years. While some authorities see no objection to some of the proposed methods (Faderbusch, *Binetivot Hatstand*, pp. 209 ff.), the overwhelming majority has ruled that stunning is contrary to the rules of Shehitah (ibid.; Lewin, Munk, and Berman, *Religious Freedom*, pp. 179 ff.; Sassoon, *Critical Study of Electric Stunning; Seriei Eish*. vol. 1, pp. 1-172; vol. 3, sec. 90).

It has been suggested that the purpose of Shehitah is to indicate reluctance to allow the eating of meat altogether. In Genesis it is written: "And God said: Behold, I have given you every herb yielding seed, which is upon the face of the earth, and every tree, in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed -- to you it shall be for food" (Gen 1:29). Meat is not mentioned here among the foods permitted to man. Only after the flood was Noah told: Every moving thing that liveth shall be for you; as the green herb have I given you all" (Gen. 9:3). The implication is that man ideally should not eat meat because it entails

taking the life of an animal. Later on there was an effort to limit the use of flesh to sacrifices. How else can we explain the following biblical passage: "When the Lord thy God shall enlarge thy border, as He hath promised thee, and thou shalt say: 'I will eat flesh,' because thy soul desireth to eat flesh; thou mayest eat flesh, after all the desire of thy soul. If the place which the Lord thy God shall choose to put His name there be too far from thee, then thou shalt slaughter of thy cattle and of thy flock, as I have commanded thee, and thou shalt eat within thy gates, after all the the desire of thy soul" (Deut. 12:20-21)?

The permission to eat meat was thus a compromise. Hence the eating should, at least, be controlled by refraining from eating certain parts of the animal, especially the blood, and by special regulations governing the preparation of the meat (see Dresner and Siegel, *Jewish Dietary Laws*, pp. 21-23).

The Talmud summarizes the laws of Shehitah as follows: "One may not slaughtering of any Tabah [butcher] who does not know the rules of Shehitah. And these are: pausing, pressing, burrowing, deflecting, and tearing" (B. Hul. 9a). In talmudic times, the tabah was both butcher shohet. Among our Yemenite brethren, it continued to be so until recently. In the Western countries, however, the ritual slaughtering of animals became a profession in its own right, restricted to persons of great piety who trained for it.

A Shohet is required to have a license to practice. This license (kabalah) is granted by a recognized scholar (Y.D. 1:1 in Rama); it is granted only to a person who has been trained in the theory and practice of Shehitah, and has passed a thorough examination in both. Only persons of great piety are eligible. After the examining scholar is satisfied with the applicant's piety ('Arukh Hashulhan, Y.D. 1:23), he examines him concerning Shehitah and Bediqah (see below), including the expertise in perparing the knife as required for Shehiah (ibid).

Anyone who satisfies the preceding requirements is eligible to become a shohet. Theoretically, therefore, women are also eligible (B. Hul. 2a; Y.D. 1:l). The accepted custom, however, is that women do not enter this occupation (Y.D. 1:1). Most frequently it is explained that women would have an untoward emotional reaction to the act of slaughtering. There have been exceptions, however, where women were permitted (Simlah Hadashah 1:13; see also Berman, *Shehitah*, p. 134).

Unit XXVI:

The Dietary Laws (v)

Mixing of Kosher and Non-Kosher Foods

Sources

Eating Milk and Meat

Accidental Mixing

The Accidental Mixing of Milk and Meat

Meat and Milk Dishes

Accidental Mixing of Dishes

Annulment by Sixty Times the Volume

Substances That Impart a Disgusting Flavor

Doubtful Cases

XXVI: The Dietary Laws (IV) Meat and Milk; Mixing of Kosher and Non-Kosher Foods

Milk and Meat: Introduction

The separation of milk and meat is the most prominent distinguishing mark of the Jewish home. Most of the laws connected with the consumption of food are the concern of the shohet, the butcher, and the grocer, all of whom are involved before the food reaches the home. With the separation of milk and meat, the family becomes directly involved and the kitchen receives its Jewish character.

Neither the Bible nor the Talmud gives any rationale for these laws. Maimonides ascribes their origin to Jewish disgust at the fertility rites practiced by the pagan cults of Canaan (Guide 3:48). One of these rites was the cooking of a kid in its mother's milk. Dr. Nelson Glueck reports that this practice is still found among the Bedouins of today, not as a pagan rite but as an act of hospitality to a distinguished guest (see also Finkelstein, *Pharisees* 1:58-60, 2:831-32, n.; *Encyclopedia Miqra'it*, 1:89; Baron, *Social and Religious History*, 1:328, n. 22).

To us this regulation reflects reverence for life and the teaching of compassion. To seethe a kid in its mother's milk is callous. Professor Abraham Joshua Heschel expresses it thus: The goat--in our case, more commonly the cow--generously and steadfastly provides man with the single most perfect food that he possesses, milk. It is the only food which, by reason of its proper composition of fat, carbohydrates, and protein, can by itself sustain the human body. How ungrateful and callous we would be to take the child of an animal to whom we are thus indebted and cook it in the very milk which nourishes us and is given us so freely by its mother (see Ibn Ezra on Exod. 23:19; Dresner and Siegel, *Jewish Dietary Laws*, p. 70).

1. Sources

The laws concerning the consumption and cooking of milk and meat together are based on one verse which is repeated three times in the Torah, "Thou shalt not seethe a kid in its mother's milk" (Exod. 23:19, 34:26; Deut. 14:21). The Talmud interprets this prohibition to include all kinds of meat, not only that of a kid, explaining that a kid is mentioned specifically because cooking a young goat in its mother's milk was the prevalent custom (B. Hul. 113b; Y.D. 87:2). The term meat, however, is limited to its popular connotation; it does not include fish, or locusts in places where it is permitted to eat locusts (Y.D. 87:3).

The rabbis noted that the prohibition is mentioned three times; they interpreted this to indicate that it refers not only to cooking, but also to eating and to the derivation of any benefit (*hanaah*) from the cooked mixture. Thus it is forbidden to cook milk and meat (the very act of cooking), to eat the cooked mixture, or to derive any benefit therefrom. A dish that combines meat and milk may not even be fed to one's dog, but must be

disposed of. Since the Bible speaks of "cooking," this stringency prohibiting any benefit from a mixture applies only when the milk and meat have been cooked together, not just mixed (Y.D. 87:1, and Rama).

2. Eating Milk and Meat

Milk and meat, or products derived therefrom, may not be eaten together, or even one after the other at the same meal. Therefore, if a person eats meat, he must wait until the next meal before eating cheese or drinking milk. Since a precise interval of time is not specified in the Talmud, customs vary. In certain localities the waiting period was six hours; in others, it was as little as one hour. The prevalent custom is to wait six hours (Y.D. 89:1 in Rama).

The reason for this waiting period is that meat leaves a taste in the mouth that lingers for a long time, and eating a milk product before the meat has had a chance to be digested would be tantamount to eating them together. Also, particles of meat become lodged between the teeth, and they are not dissolved by salivary action until at least six hours have elapsed (Y.D. 89 in Taz I).

If, however, one eats a milk product, he may eat meat after it without an intervening waiting period (ibid. 2). According to some authorities, aged or hard cheeses are subject to the same rule as meat, and if one partakes of these, he must wait six hours before eating meat (ibid. in Shakh and Taz). Since meat may not be cooked in a vessel used for cooking milk, and vice versa (Y.D. 93:1), it has become the established practice to have two sets of dishes, one for meat foods and the other for dairy. However, food cooked in a vessel reserved for meat is not considered a meat dish, and if one eats such a dish he may partake of milk and its derivatives immediately afterward (Y.D. 89:3 in Rama).

If one wishes to eat meat after milk, or milk after meat, even after the prescribed interval, the tablecloth that was used for the first must be replaced and the bread that was on the table must be removed. All the dishes should be removed; even the knife used for cutting bread at the meal should be changed. This means that there must be separate knives for cutting bread at meat meals and dairy meals (Y.D. 89:4 and in Rama). If the salt shakers are the open type, separate shakers should be used for milk meals and meat meals, since otherwise someone might accidentally dip his food in the salt rather than pour the salt over it (Y.D. 88:2 in Rama).

Because meat and milk are forbidden when mixed, extra precautions are necessary to prevent errors. If two persons who know each other should chance to eat at the same table, one eating meat and the other dairy, they must place an object between them to serve as a barrier or a reminder that they must not eat of each other's food (Y.D. 88:1). Strangers, however, who ordinarily do not partake of each other's food, need no such reminder (ibid.).

Also, a milk dish should not be cooked in an oven where meat is being roasted, if the dishes are uncovered and the oven is closed, because the vapor arising from the milk will enter the meat. The situation would be the same as if some milk had fallen upon the meat, and the meat would have to measure sixty times the volume of the milk to annul it (Y.D. 92:8).

3. Accidental Mixing

Before giving the detailed rules regarding the accidental mixing of forbidden and permitted foods (ta'arovet), we should define a number of relevant terms represented here in Hebrew alphabetical order.

Ein mevatlin issur lekhatilah--it is not permitted willfully to annul a prohibited article of food by dropping it into a vessel with sixty times its volume of permitted kosher food; nor is it permitted to add to a mixture that has already occurred accidentally that does not have sixty times the volume of the forbidden food, in order to complete the required amount for the annulment (Y.D. 99:5). But should such an annulment be effected accidentally, the mixture is permitted (ibid.).

Issur davuq -- a forbidden piece of food which is organically attached to a permitted piece. An example is a piece of forbidden fat attached to meat that is kosher.

Afilu be'elef lo bateil--literally, "it cannot be annulled even by a thousand times its volume." Actually, it means that the article cannot be annulled at all.

Efshar lesohato--when it is possible to squeeze out a forbidden substance that has been absorbed by a permitted food, does the substance resume its status of a permitted food? (see also Hatikhah na'aseit neveilah; see B. Hul. 108 f. and Tosafot and Rashi ad loc.).

Bateil beshishim--it becomes annulled by a substance sixty times its volume. This principle applies to cases of forbidden foods that are accidentally mixed with permitted food. If the permitted food has sixty times the volume of the forbidden food, the latter becomes annulled and has no effect on the permitted food (see B. Hul. 97a f., 98a ff.).

Beriah--literally, "a creature." The rule is that afilu be'elef lo bateil--it does not become annulled even by a thousand times its volume, and the principle of bateil beshishim does not apply. That means that it can never be annulled (see B. Hul. 100a). A beriah is subject to the following conditions:

1. It must be something that originally possessed life (see B. Mak. 17a).
2. It must have been prohibited from the beginning of its existence.
3. It must be something which loses its distinctive name if it is not whole.
4. It must be whole (see Tosafot, Hul. 96a, s.v. Mai Ta'ama).

Bishul--literally, "cooking" or "boiling." When used in the codes, it includes frying, roasting, boiling, or any process where the use of fire or heat is involved.

Basar-literally, "meat" It includes the flesh of kosher animals unless the flesh of non-kosher beasts or birds is explicitly included. Also included are matured eggs that are still in the fowl. Excluded are fish, locusts, hides, dry bones, horns, and hoofs (Y.D. 87:3, 6, 7).

Geridah--scraping. When a forbidden food touches a permitted food, the permitted food must sometimes be scraped at the point of contact (Y.D. 96 and in Shakh 21).

Davar harif--a food or substance with a sharp taste, such as radishes, onions, or condiments. A dayar harif may cause an otherwise disgusting flavor (noten ta'am lifgam) to become pleasing (noten ta'am leshevah).

Davar sheyesh lo matirin--thing that becomes, or is, forbidden but will eventually be permitted. Such articles of food cannot be annulled--afilu be'elef lo bateil (see below, p. 374 f. for the classical example, and Y.D. 102:1).

Hozer wene'or--forbidden article of food that fell into permitted food more than sixty times its volume and was thus bateil beshishim is "reawakened" if more of the same forbidden food is added, making the permitted food less than sixty times its volume, and the mixture therefore becomes forbidden (Y.D. 99:6 and in Shakh 21).

Halav--literally, "milk," usually refers to the milk of living kosher animals unless specified otherwise. Excluded are the milk of non-kosher animals, milk of kosher animals that has been extracted after the animals were slaughtered, and the milk of humans (Y.D. 87:6).

Hatikhah hare'uyah lehitkabad--a portion that may be served to guests is afilu be'elef lo bateil (Y.D. 101:1; B. Hul. 100a and Tosafot ad loc.). Such a portion must be forbidden per se and not because it became forbidden through mixture or contact with forbidden food. Also, it must be cooked and ready to be served (Y.D. 101:2, 3).

Hatikhah na'aseit neveilah--literally, "the piece itself becomes carrion." This principle refers to the case where a piece of permitted food has absorbed from forbidden food enough not to be bateil beshishim. That piece of food in turn becomes forbidden in its entirety (like carrion) so that if it falls accidentally into a vessel with kosher food, we need sixty times the volume of the entire piece, not just of the amount of the forbidden food that has been absorbed (Y.D. 92:3, 4; B.Hul. 96b, 108a).

Ta'am ke'iqqar--"the flavor is tantamount to the substance." For example, if a forbidden article of food accidentally falls into a vessel containing permitted food and is then removed, but the taste of it is felt, it is as if the substance itself were present (B. Pes. 44b; B. Hul. 108a, and Rashi ad loc.).

Kavush kimevushal--soaking for twenty-four hours is as damaging as cooking. If two articles of food, one forbidden (terefah) and one permitted (kosher), were soaked together for twenty-four hours, it is as if they were cooked together, and the mixture is permitted only if it has sixty times the volume of the forbidden food, exclusive of the forbidden article itself (Y.D. 105: 1). Soaking in salt water, even for a short period, is tantamount to cooking. A short period is defined as the interval in which the mixture could be placed on the fire and brought to a boil (Y.D. 105:1; B.Hul. 97b, 11 lb; B. Pes. 76a).

Kedei netilah--paring the thickness of a finger. When forbidden food touches permitted food, the permitted food sometimes has to be pared at the point of contact to the amount of the thickness of a finger (see B. Pes. 75b f.; Y.D. 96:1).

Keli rishon--vessel, containing food, that is directly on the fire, or removed from the fire but still hot enough to repel a hand that touches it (hayad soledet bo) (P. Shab. 3:4; B. Shab. 40b).

Keli sheini--a vessel that is not on the fire into which food has been poured from a keli rishon (ibid.).

Min bemino--a homogeneous mixture; i.e., a piece of meat that is permitted becomes mixed up with forbidden pieces of meat (B.Hul. 96b f.; Y.D. 98).

Min beshe'eino mino--a heterogeneous mixture; e.g., a vegetable that falls into a vessel with forbidden soup (ibid.).

Maliah keroteah--a substance that is salted so much that it becomes inedible is considered as if it were hot (Y.D. 91:5; Rama 105:9; B. Pes. 76a).

Notein ta'am--literally, "imparts a flavor." For example, if a forbidden substance accidentally falls into a vessel with kosher food and the forbidden food imparts a flavor to it, the kosher food becomes forbidden (M.Hul. 7:3-4; B.Hul. 98a).

Notein ta'am bar notein ta'am--literally, "a taste born of a taste," is permitted. For example, if fish is fried in a meat frying pan, it may be served in a milk dish because there are three stages of notein ta'am here: (1) the meat imparting the meat flavor to the frying pan, (2) the imparting of the meat flavor from the frying pan to the fish, (3) the imparting of the meat flavor from the fish to the milk dish. Since there is no prohibition involved in the first two stages, not enough potency is left in the flavor to forbid the third stage (Y.D. 95:1; B.Hul. 111a).

Notein ta'am lifgam--literally, "imparts a disgusting flavor." For example, if a forbidden article of food accidentally falls into permitted food and the article has a disgusting taste in itself (e.g., putrid food), or if it is not disgusting in itself but becomes disgusting when

mixed with this food and has a deteriorating effect on it, the food remains permitted (Y.D. 103:1); B. A.Z. 65b, 67b).

'Irui mikeli rishon--liquid poured directly from a keli rishon.

Qelifah--literally, "paring." If forbidden food touches permitted food under certain circumstances, the permitted food must be pared at the point of contact (B. Pes. 75b). The difference between qelifah and geridah is that in the former the paring has to come off in one piece (Y.D. 96 in Shakh 21).

Tata'ah gavar--literally, "the nether conquers," i.e., it is assumed that when one substance falls into another, one being hot and the other cold, the lower is dominant and imparts its temperature to the substance above it (B. Pes. 76a).

4. The Accidental Mixing of Milk and Meat

If meat touches cheese, and both are cold and dry, no harm is done to either. If one of them is moist, the points of contact should be rinsed with water (Y.D. 91:1 and Shakh 1). If moist meat or cheese comes into contact with bread, the bread should be eaten only with the kind of food it touches (Y.D. 91:3).

If a piece of meat accidentally falls into a pot of milk, the rules are as follows:

- 1.If both the meat and the milk are cold, the meat should be removed immediately and rinsed; then both may be eaten (Y.D. 91:4).
- 2.If both are hot, both become forbidden; see below about bateil beshishim (ibid.).
- 3.If one of them is hot and the other cold, the principle of tata'ah gavar is applied, and therefore, if the nether substance is hot, it is as if both substances were hot and the rule given in item (2) above is followed. If the lower substance is cold, it is as if both substances were cold and the rule given in item (1) above is followed (Y.D. 91:4). The meat, however, must be pared (Y.D. 91:4) because it takes a bit of time for the lower substance to cool the upper one, and during this interval it absorbs (B. Pes. 76a, quoted in Taz 6, Shakh 7).

Further, if meat accidentally falls into hot milk, but is immediately removed, the milk is permitted on the principle of bateil beshishim if the volume of the milk is sixty times the volume of the meat (Y.D. 92:1). We need this even though the meat has been removed, because of the principle of ta'am ke'iqqar. The piece of meat itself is not edible because it absorbed the milk.

If a drop of milk accidentally falls on a piece of meat cooking in a pot, two factors must be considered:

1. The position of the piece of meat upon which the drop of milk fell--i.e., whether it is on the surface or completely immersed.
2. Whether the contents of the pot were stirred immediately after the milk fell upon the piece of meat.

If the meat is on the surface and the contents of the pot were not stirred, the meat is forbidden, on the principle of *hatikhah na'aseit neveilah*, unless its volume is sixty times the volume of the milk.

If the contents of the pot were subsequently stirred, they must amount to sixty times the volume of the piece of meat in order for the principle of *bateil beshishim* to apply.

If the contents were not stirred at all, then it is sufficient to pare *kedei netilah*, at the point of contact of another piece of meat that touched the piece of meat upon which the milk fell (Y.D. 92:2; Shakh and Peri Megadim ad loc.).

If the piece of meat upon which the milk fell is submerged, even partially, the pot's entire contents are measured to determine whether it is sixty times the volume of the milk, as is necessary for the application of *bateil beshishim* (ibid. in Shakh 4, and *Hokhmat Adam* 44:1).

If a drop of milk falls on the outside of a pot that is on the fire, it must be determined whether the spot touched by the milk is below or above the level of the contents of the pot. If below, it is as if it fell into the pot itself, because it is assumed that it is bound to seep through the wall of the pot; therefore, if the contents are sixty times the volume of the milk, no harm is done (Y.D. 92:5). If above the level of the contents, only the spot where the milk falls becomes forbidden. The procedure to follow is to let the pot cool and then empty the contents via the other side (ibid. and in Shakh 20).

If a drop of milk falls on the outside of the pot on a spot that is reached by the fire, no harm is done because the fire burns it out immediately (*Hokhmat Adam* 45.8; Y.D. 92:6). If a large amount of milk spills on the pot, then even if it is reached by the fire, the rule is the same as if the milk had fallen below the level of the contents (ibid.).

If the milk falls on the cover of a pot of meat boiling on the fire, and the steam constantly reaches the cover, it is as if the milk had fallen on the pot below the level of the contents. If the pot is not boiling, its contents are not affected. If the cover itself is hot, however, it becomes forbidden; if it is not hot, it simply needs rinsing (Y.D. 92:7 in Rama).

If a milk spoon is dipped into a pot of hot meat soup, or a meat spoon is dipped into a pot with hot milk, the contents of the pot are forbidden unless their volume is sixty times the volume of the part of the spoon that was immersed in the food (Y.D. 94:1, 2).

If the spoon had not been used for at least twenty-four hours prior to the dipping, the contents of the pot are unaffected because a vessel not used for twenty-four hours is in the category of notein ta'am lifgam (Y.D. 94:1 in Rama). In either case, the spoon itself becomes forbidden (ibid.).

5. Meat and Milk Dishes

Since meat may not be cooked in a pot used for dairy, and dairy foods may not be cooked in a pot used for meat, one should have separate dishes for milk and meat (Y.D. 93:1; 'Arukh Hashulhan 88:10-11).

Inasmuch as a glass dish needs no kashering if used for both milk and meat, it is often asked whether one set of glass dishes is sufficient for both meat and dairy meals. The same question has been asked about the type of glassware (e.g. Pyrex) used for cooking and serving hot foods. The consensus is that two sets of dishes are required even in the case of glassware (see responsa on this question by Rabbi J. L. Feinberg and Rabbi Isaac Klein in Law Committee Archives).

If meat is cooked in a dairy pot, or vice-versa, and the pot has been used within the preceding twenty-four hours, the food thus cooked becomes forbidden (Y.D. 93:1). If twenty-four hours have passed since the pot's last previous use, the food is permitted on the principle of notein ta'am lifgam (ibid.).

In all the above cases, any vessel that becomes forbidden (except an earthenware vessel) may be kashered by following the procedure elaborated in the discussion of the laws of Pesach (see unit 7). Glass dishes, however, need no kashering.

If hot meat is cut with a dairy knife, the same rule applies: i.e., the meat is forbidden unless it has a volume equal to sixty times the volume of the part of the blade that came into contact with the meat; the knife itself needs kashering (Y.D. 94:7). As in the case of vessels, if the knife was not used for twenty-four hours prior to the accidental cutting of the meat, we do not need sixty times the volume of the blade. All that is necessary is to pare the meat kedei qelifah at the point of contact with the knife and the knife needs scrubbing and wiping (ibid.).

6. Accidental Mixing of Dishes

Dairy and meat dishes should not be washed together. If they are, the following rules apply:

1. If both have been used within twenty-four hours prior to the washing, and both dishes are soiled and the water used for washing is hot (i.e., it is in a keli rishon), each makes the other forbidden, and in order to be used again, they must be kashered (Y.D. 95:3 in Rama).

2. If the water is cold (i.e., it is from a keli sheini), the dishes are unaffected (ibid.).
3. Likewise, if the vessels are clean and have not been used for twenty-four hours or more, they remain unaffected (Y.D. 95:3 and in Rama).
4. If one of the utensils is soiled, and the other, clean, only the clean one is affected and needs kashering (Y.D. 95:3 in Shakh 10).
5. If the dishes are washed in the same vessel, not together but rather one after another, they are not affected (Y.D. 95:3 in Rama).
6. If the water is poured (irui) from a keli rishon into a vessel that contains both milk and meat dishes, opinions differ as follows:
 - a. The dishes are unaffected.
 - b. They become forbidden, with the exception of cases involving substantial loss.
 - c. If the dishes can be kashered, the strict rule is followed; if they cannot be kashered, the lenient rule is followed and the dishes are considered to be unaffected (Darkhei Teshuvah 95:73).

A related question presented by modern technology pertains to the use of dishwashing machines. May the same dishwasher be used for milk and meat dishes, or are separate machines necessary?

We accept the opinion that it is permitted to use the same dishwashing machine, and even the same racks, for both milk and meat dishes, with the following provisos:

1. That the milk and meat dishes are not washed together.
2. That the machine is allowed to run a full cycle between the washing of milk and meat dishes (Efrati, Sha'arei Halakhah, sec. 4, pp. 29-33).

There are some opinions that separate racks are required for milk and meat dishes if the racks are not of metal (Law Committee Archives, vol. 5, pp. 52-53). The latest authorities, however, do not regard racks made of nonferrous material as keli heres, which may not be kashered, but as keli even (stoneware), which may be kashered (Efrati, loc. cit.).

Thus far we have dealt with the accidental mixing of milk and meat where cooking and heat are involved. There are also cases of accidental mixing where no heat is involved, but which, for specific reasons, are subject to the same rulings.

1. Maliah keroteah--meat salted to the point of inedibility is considered to be hot; if it is accidentally mixed with milk, it needs sixty times its volume to annul it (Y.D. 91:5; 105:9 in Rama). In such cases, the principle of tata'ah gavar does not apply (Y.D. 91:5).
2. Kavush kemevushal--a forbidden food that is cold and was soaked for twenty-four hours in a permitted food is subject to the same ruling that would apply if they were cooked together (Y.D. 105:l).
3. Soaking in brine and vinegar is considered the same as cooking if the food remained in these for the same amount of time that would be required for it to come to the boil if put on the fire (ibid.).

These rules about the accidental mixing of milk and meat apply generally to all cases of a forbidden food accidentally being mixed with a permitted food. One fact must be taken into consideration, however: the mixing of milk and meat is unique in that each of the two, the milk and the meat, is permitted when by itself; only when they are mixed do they become forbidden. The other cases involve mixtures where one of the two is forbidden by itself.

This results in variations in the application of certain rules. For example, the principle of *notein ta'am bar notein ta'am* is applicable only in cases involving meat and milk (Y.D. 95 in Taz 1).

According to some authorities, the principle of *hatikhah na'aseit neveilah* only applies to the accidental mixing of meat and milk but not to other mixtures of forbidden foods (Y.D. 92:4). We follow the authorities that do not make this distinction (*ibid.* in Rama; see *Arukh Hashulban*, Y.D. 92:23 ff., for a full discussion of the subject).

7. Annulment by Sixty Times the Volume

In accidental mixtures, as already mentioned, the principle of *bateil beshishim* is applied--i.e., if a forbidden food accidentally falls into a pot wherein a permitted food is cooking, the permitted food is unaffected and remains edible if it is at least sixty times the volume of the forbidden food.

Originally, in such situations, a Gentile was asked to taste the mixture and to tell whether the forbidden substance imparted its flavor to the permitted food. The principle of *bateil beshishim* was resorted to when no Gentile was available or when the flavors of the two substances could not be distinguished, as in the case of a homogeneous mixture (*min bemino*). Later authorities decided that the original method was unreliable and applied the principle of *bateil beshishim* to all cases (cf. B..Hul. 97a f.; Y.D. 98:1).

This rule, while derived from a biblical source (see B. Hul. 98a f.; Maimonides, Hil. Ma'akhalot Asurot 15:21), is actually based on the assumption that no ordinary substance has the potency to impart its flavor to another substance sixty or more times its volume (*Hokhmat Adam* 51:6).

In all these cases of accidental mixing, the forbidden substance, if it can be identified, must be removed (Y.D. 98:4 in Rama). Even if the forbidden substance is removed, it is still necessary to have sixty times its volume, on the principle of *ta'am ke'iqqar*.

The remedy of *bateil beshishim* applies to accidental mixing. It is not permitted to deliberately drop a piece of forbidden food into a vessel containing permitted food sixty times its volume in order to cause the forbidden food to be annulled. Furthermore, even if the initial mixing occurred accidentally, but the permitted food was not sixty times the

volume of the forbidden food, adding to the permitted food in order to attain the sixty-to-one ratio is prohibited (Y.D. 99:5).

There are some noteworthy exceptions to the principle of bateil beshishim. Some of these are merely variations on the principle; others are real exceptions to the rule.

Variations

The udder of a cow that accidentally falls into a vessel of boiling meat food becomes annulled by fifty-nine times its volume (cf. B. Uul. 96b). While the udder is the source of the problem, because of the milk absorbed in it, it is nevertheless meat, and when joined with fifty-nine times its volume makes up the required sixty (Y.D. 90:1, 98:8; see also Maimonides, Hil. Ma'akhalot Asurot 15:18, where the reason given is that the rule was made more lenient because the milk in the udder is forbidden only rabbinically and not biblically).

If an egg is prohibited because it contains a chick (cf. B. Hul. 98a and Tosafot ad loc.) there must be sixty-one permitted eggs in order to annul the forbidden one. The reason is that eggs vary in size, and in order to be sure that there is sixty times the volume of the forbidden egg, there should be sixty-one eggs (Y.D. 86:5; B.H. 10; and 98:7). Again Maimonides gives a different reason: an egg that is about to hatch is a separate creature, and the rabbis, therefore, made a distinction in this case (see Hil. Ma'akhalot Asurot 15:19).

If a prohibited dry food article is accidentally mixed with a permitted dry food article (yaveish beyaveish) of the same species (min bemino), only twice the prohibited substance is necessary in order to annul it (Y.D. 109:1). If the prohibited substance is accidentally mixed with a permitted food of a different species (min beshe'eino mino), the principle of bateil beshishim still applies (ibid.).

For other variations, see Y.D. 294; Y.D. 323:1 in Rama; Maimonides, Hil. Ma'akhalot Asurot 15:13- 14.

Exceptions

The exceptions to the principle of bateil beshishim may be subdivided into two categories:

In one category are those food articles to which the reason for the principle of bateil beshishim does not apply. The reason for the principle is the assumption that ordinary articles of food do not impart their flavor to substances sixty or more times their volume. Experience, however, has proven that certain articles with a sharp flavor or certain other qualities do affect substances more than sixty times their volume. Thus condiments like vinegar, salt, and pepper (devarim de'avidei leta'ama) that accidentally

fall into a pot of permitted food cannot be annulled (Y.D. 98:8; Hokhmat Adam 53:29; B. A.Z. 69a; B. Hul. 97b).

A coagulant (davar hama'amid) that affects substances more than sixty times its volume is not subject to the principle of bateil beshishim (Y.D. 87:11 in Rama). Thus, cheese in which the coagulant is rennet from the stomach of a non-kosher animal is forbidden even if the amount of rennet in the cheese is less than one-thousandth the amount of milk (ibid.). However, many authorities claim that since rennet comes from the thoroughly dried wall of the stomach, it has ceased to be a food and thus is no longer forbidden (Law Committee Archives; for details, see I. Klein, "The Kashrut of Cheeses").

The other category includes substances that have a special importance inherent in their nature and therefore cannot be annulled. These are beriah (a creature), ba'al hai (a living thing), hatikhah hare'uyah lehitkabeid (a portion fit to be served to guests), and davar shebeminyan (things that are important because they are sold individually by number and not in bulk or by weight). Another item which is not subject to the principle of bateil beshishim for a most logical reason is davar sheyesh lo matirin (things that are forbidden which will eventually become permitted). Let us explain each case individually.

The case of beriah is subject to the following conditions (Y.D. 100:l):

1. It must be an entity which at one time possessed life. Thus a grain of wheat would not be included (see Rosh on B..Hul. 100a).
2. It must be an entity which was prohibited from the beginning of its existence. This would exclude, for instance, a fowl which has become forbidden because it was slaughtered improperly (ibid. in Rashi).
3. It must be an entity that would lose its identity, its distinctive name, if it is dismembered. Thus forbidden fat, though it may be an entity, is not beriah because when it is cut into pieces, each piece will still be called by its original name (ibid. in Rosh and Ran).
4. The entity must be whole. Part of a beriah is not covered by the rule of beriah (ibid.).

Even when all these conditions are present, the rule that it cannot be annulled, afilu be'elef lo bateil, applies only when the creature is present in a mixture and cannot be identified. If it can be identified, it should be removed, and the flavor that it imparted is bateil beshishim (Y.D. 100:2).

Examples of a beriah are ants, unclean fowl, and a limb torn from a living animal (ibid.).

The case of ba'al hai is similar to beriah, yet quite different (Y.D. 110:6; Hokhmat Adam 53). While a beriah is a dead creature, here the main characteristic is that it is alive. An example is a live chicken or animal that has a blemish that renders it terefah while still alive; e.g., a fowl with a damaged esophagus (Y.D. 33:8); or cattle that have been clawed

by a beast of prey (Y.D. 57). If these became mixed accidentally with others of their species, all become forbidden, and no annulment is possible (see B. Zev. 73a).

If these are slaughtered unwittingly, they lose their status of ba'al hai and are bateil beshishim. Nor do they now enter the category of beriah, inasmuch as this includes only creatures that were prohibited from the beginning of their existence (Y.D. 100:1).

The category of hatikhah hare'uyah lehitkabad (a portion fit to serve guests) comprises many items (Y.D. 101:1). The authorities enumerate a long list. A prominent example would be a whole chicken, dressed, cooked, and ready to be carved. If this chicken is forbidden and becomes mixed with kosher food, it is not bateil beshishim. It is evident, however, that these things are subject to change, varying with time and place. What is a delicacy today may be considered inferior tomorrow, and vice-versa. The rabbi who is presented with such a question must exercise his own judgment in each case (Y.D. 101 in Shakh 12, 13).

The following restrictions are to be noted:

1. The food article must be forbidden intrinsically, i.e., a thing forbidden of itself and not because it has absorbed prohibited food (Y.D. 101:2). A mixture of meat and milk is forbidden intrinsically (Y.D. 101:2).
2. The substance must be whole, not torn or crushed. If it loses its wholeness it is bateil beshishim (Y.D. 101:6).

The next category is *davar shebeminyan* (a thing which is sold by the piece and not in bulk, i.e., it is counted individually because each unit is important in itself). This too has criteria which vary with time and place. The Talmud and codes enumerate seven specific items (B. Bes. 3b, Hul. 100a; Maimonides, Hil. Ma'akhalot Asurot 16:3-4). However, it is obvious that the importance of these varies with time and place (Hil. Ma'akhalot Asurot 16:9).

The last of the categories is *davar sheyesh lo matirin* (things that will eventually be permitted by themselves). The reason is obvious: Since it will be permitted automatically, why resort to the remedy of bateil beshishim? The classic example is the egg laid on a festival, which may not be eaten on the day it was laid but may be eaten on the morrow (Y.D. 102:1). Another example is the case of an article that a person vowed not to partake of which becomes mixed with others. This is a case of *davar sheyesh lo matirin* and is not bateil beshishim because the person who made the vow can lift the prohibition by consulting a sage, or because the vow may be a temporary one (Y.D. 102:4 in Rama).

This rule applies only if the mixture is homogeneous (*min bemino*) but not if it is heterogeneous (*min beshe'eino mino*) (Y.D. 102:1). The logic of this distinction, which is made only in the case of *davar sheyesh lo matirin*, is as follows: The reasoning behind

the rule that *davar sheyesh lo matirin* cannot be annulled is that the forbidden material will become permitted again. This remedy must be patent and obvious. Where the mixture is heterogeneous, it would not be patent and obvious, because the mixture would not be designated by the part that is known as *davar sheyesh lo matirin*, but by the other material which is not so designated. If we should forbid it, there will be confusion about the reason (Y.D. 102:1 in Shakh 4; Taz 5; Hokhmat Adam 53:20). The Taz rejects this explanation, adding that in this case we simply follow the opinion of the authority who holds that there is no annulment in homogeneous mixtures.

Another modification of the rule is the following: If a forbidden substance was not identified as a separate entity before it became mixed up, it is not subject to the rule of *davar sheyesh lo matirin*; for instance, crushed grapes in a vat from which wine is issuing, and which are left in that state over the Sabbath. Normally, wine issuing on the Sabbath may not be drunk on that Sabbath but may be drunk after its conclusion. Hence, the wine is in the category of *davar sheyesh lo matirin*, and if it gets mixed up with other wine, it should not be *bateil beshishim*. In this case, however, if there already was wine in the vat before the advent of the Sabbath, and additional wine keeps oozing into it from the grapes, one may drink from that wine since at no time could the forbidden liquid be distinguished as a separate entity (Y.D. 102:4 in Shakh 12 and Taz 11; Hokhmat Adam 53:27).

8. Substances That Impart a Disgusting Flavor

The principle of *notein ta'am lifgam* is that if a forbidden article of food accidentally falls into a vessel in which permitted food is being cooked, and imparts a flavor that is disgusting to the taste, the permitted food is unaffected and there is no need for annulment by sixty times the volume of the forbidden food (Y.D. 103:1).

The following distinctions should be noted:

1. There are substances that are themselves disgusting to the taste, such as loathsome creatures.
2. There are substances that by themselves are not disgusting to the taste but impart a disgusting taste when mixed with other foods (Y.D. 103:1; B. A.Z. 65b). Examples are the flavors of animal fat in wine and of meat in olive oil (Y.D. 103:4).
3. Objects that impart a weakened flavor because of external factors. For example, a vessel that becomes forbidden because non-kosher food has been cooked in it; if this vessel had not been used for twenty-four hours or more (*eino ben yomo*), the kosher food that was cooked in it remains unaffected because the flavor the vessel may impart to the food is in the category of *notein ta'am lifgam* (Y.D. 103:5).

Generally speaking, the principle of *notein ta'am lifgam* applies to forbidden food that accidentally falls into a vessel with kosher food. There are several distinctions to remember, however.

If a vessel has not been used for twenty-four hours or more and is then used for kosher food, the food, as we said, remains unaffected because of the principle of *notein ta'am lifgam*. If, however, the kosher food is a *davar harif* (food with a sharp taste), no distinction is made between a vessel used within twenty-four hours and one not used within the last twenty-four hours because the sharpness of the food arouses even a weakened flavor (Y.D. 103:6; Y.D. 122 in Rama).

Another distinction has to do with forbidden substances that cannot be annulled. These substances, if they are intrinsically disgusting to the taste, are subject to the ruling of *notein ta'am lifgam*. If they are not intrinsically disgusting, but impart a disgusting flavor when mixed with another substance, they retain their status as substances that cannot be annulled (Y.D. 103:1). The logic is that a disgusting flavor has no effect in mixtures where the imparting of the flavor (*netinat ta'am*) of a forbidden food determines the status of a food article. Where it is not the taste that determines, but another factor, such as being a *davar hashuv*, the presence of a disgusting flavor does not make any difference and, hence, the food is still forbidden (Y.D. 103:1 in Rama).

9. Doubtful Cases

When doubt arises about the permissibility of an article of food, the general principle is that *sefeqa de'oraita lehumra*. If the doubt concerns an article forbidden in the Torah, it is resolved by a strict ruling; if it concerns an article forbidden by postbiblical authorities, then *sefeqa derabbanan lequla*--we follow the lenient ruling and permit it.

For example, an animal that was not slaughtered properly (e.g., if it was slaughtered with a knife whose blade was dented) is considered an *issur de'oraita*. Therefore, if a doubt arises (e.g., if the knife was examined before the slaughtering and found to be smooth, and was examined again after the slaughtering and found to have a dent--the doubt is whether the dent was caused by the skin of the neck and thus before the slaughtering, thereby causing the animal to become *terefah*, or by the bones of the nape, after the severing of the esophagus and windpipe, thus making the animal kosher), the rule is *lehumra* and the animal is *terefah* (Y.D. 18:1).

On the other hand, consider the example of a *hatikhah hare'uyah lehitkabeid* (a portion fit to serve for guests). The ruling that such a portion *afilu be'elef lo bateil* is rabbinic. Therefore, if doubt arises whether a food article is in this category, the principle of *sefeqa derabbanan lequla* is followed and the article is *bateil beshishim* (Y.D. 101:1 in Rama).

Connected with these rulings is the principle of *kol qavua' kemehetsah'al mehetsah damei* (all that is stationary and established is considered as half and half (B. Ket. 15a)). Thus, if a person bought some meat from a meat market, in a place where there are markets that sell kosher meat and markets that sell non-kosher meat, and he does not know at which market he shopped, the rule is that no matter what the ratio of kosher to

non-kosher shops, even if nine sell kosher meat and only one sells non-kosher meat, we account it as if the ratio were one to one, i.e., five kosher, and five nonkosher, and thus we rule that the meat is terefah (Y.D. 110:3).

Corollary to this is the principle kol deparish meiruba parish (anything that has become separated, has become separated from the majority). Therefore, if a piece of meat is found not in an established stationary place but abandoned or lost, we rule that it originated in a place that is of the majority. If the majority of meat markets deal in kosher meat, the found meat is considered as coming from one of them (ibid.).

If a person bought meat from a kosher meat market, and then some terefah meat was found there, and now it cannot be identified, the rule is that the meat bought before the discovery of the terefah meat is permissible because the principle of qavua' cannot be applied before the terefah meat was discovered, and instead the principle of kol deparish meiruba parish holds. If the meat was bought after it became known that there was terefah meat in the shop, it is forbidden because then the principle of qavua' applies (Y.D. 110:5).

This leads us to the principle of sfeq sfeqa--double doubt. If one of the above pieces that we ruled to be forbidden is accidentally mixed up with other permitted pieces, it is bateil berov--it becomes annulled if the volume of the permitted food merely exceeds the volume of the forbidden food, because of the principle of sfeq sfeqa--i.e., it is questionable whether the forbidden piece is itself forbidden or not. Even if it should be forbidden, now that it has fallen into another mixture we are again in doubt with each piece whether it is the forbidden or the permitted one (Y.D. 110:4). The Rama, however, does not consider this a true case of sfeq sfeqa since the first doubt (safeq) has already been resolved (see there and in Shakh for detailed rules of what constitutes sfeq sfeqa.)