

# The Malbim Haggadah

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## Translators' Foreword

The Malbim — for those acquainted with it, the name evokes a sense of clarity and simplicity in understanding the words of the Torah. The Malbim's classic commentary on Chumash, as well as on the rest of Tanach, is distinguished by its pertinent questions on the most basic (and most important) level of understanding, and by the elegant explanations of the straightforward intent of the text. Familiar with the style of the Malbim, one can easily imagine how welcome a Malbim commentary on the Haggadah would be, for the Haggadah — the most widely read Jewish text after the Bible — is also one of the least understood.

Although the Haggadah stands at the center of the Seder, and although every Jew is obligated to participate in its recitation, to a great extent it remains obscure and confusing. As a story the text seems incoherent, the chronology awry, certain events are inexplicably placed out of order while others are repeated without any apparent reason. As a Halachic guide the text is similarly unintelligible; fragments of Halachic discourse are scattered throughout, seemingly at random, leaving a bizarre mosaic which cries out for explanation, but at the same time seems to defy it.

In his brilliant analysis of the p'shat, or the simple, straightforward meaning of the text, the author of Medrash Haggadah, the formal title of the Malbim Haggadah, reveals the divine inspiration underlying the words of our Sages which, along with the relevant verses from the Torah, comprise the Haggadah. He raises the questions which perplex the intelligent reader, and then offers lucid explanations which are rooted in a sensitive analysis of the text. His explanations demonstrate that the allusions which the Sages derived from the verses are not merely man's arbitrary assignments of meaning to God's word, but that they are the genuine intent of His word.

A little known edition of this famous commentary, printed in 5654 (1894) and only recently rediscovered, includes a remarkable essay which reveals the secret of the structure of the Haggadah, a puzzle which has challenged generations of scholars. This essay, entitled Maamar Yesod Mosad, A Statement of the Fundamental Principle [of the Haggadah], has been translated and adapted as the Overview.

Our English translation of the Malbim Haggadah follows the question- explanation style of the original Hebrew commentary. We have also included source references which were lacking in the original. Parts of the author's commentary which we felt were not essential to understanding the Haggadah are included as footnotes. In addition, our own comments on the commentary are included

in footnotes marked by “(Eds.)”. Although not included in the original Malbim Haggadah, we have translated and included the Malbim’s commentary on Tehillim for the second part of Hallel.

Although this commentary on the Haggadah has been known for many years as the Malbim Haggadah, recently doubts have arisen concerning the authorship of the commentary. We have researched the question and have included our findings in an intriguing essay which we hope sheds light on this mystery.

We are privileged to present the Malbim Haggadah to the English-speaking public for the first time since its first appearance in Hebrew one hundred years ago. We offer our humble expression of gratitude to the Almighty for granting us this privilege, and we pray that this commentary assist the reader in the quest for a deeper understanding of the Haggadah, a heightened appreciation of the Pesach Seder, and a greater reverence for the words of our Sages and, ultimately, for the word of God.

## Overview

The Maggid Section of the Haggadah (the order of paragraphs for easier reference)

1. Ha Lachma Anya
2. *Mah Nishtana*
3. *Avadim Hayinu*
4. Maaseh B’Rabbi Eliezer
5. Amar Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah
6. Baruch Hamakom
7. Arbah Banim (the four sons)
8. *Yachol m’rosh chodesh*
9. Mit’chilah Ovdei Avodah Zarah Hayu Avoseinu
10. Baruch Shomer Havtachaso
11. V’hi sh’amda
12. Tzei u’lmad
13. Kammah Maalos Tovos
14. Rabban Gamliel haya omer
15. *B’chol Dor va’Dor*
16. L’fichach (Hallel)

## Some Questions

1. The compiler of the Haggadah should have placed the paragraph “*Avadim Hayinu* — We were slaves unto Pharaoh in Egypt” after the paragraph “*Mit’chilah Ovdei Avodah Zarah Hayu Avoseinu* — At first our fathers were idol worshippers”, according to the chronological order of events. The second paragraph refers to Terach, Avraham’s father, who died two hundred years before Avraham’s children descended to Egypt and became slaves, the topic of the first paragraph. This question is strengthened when we look at the conclusion of the second paragraph, “*Mit’chilah Ovdei Avodah Zarah Hayu Avoseinu*”: “and Yaakov and his children went down to Egypt”. These words would have served as an ideal transition to the paragraph “*Avadim Hayinu* — We were slaves unto Pharaoh in Egypt”, had the compiler of the Haggadah placed the paragraphs in chronological order.
2. The opening paragraph of the Haggadah, from “*Avadim Hayinu*” to “*V’afilu kulanu chachamim* — Therefore, even if we were all wise” is unnecessary. The narrative which “*Avadim Hayinu*” briefly relates is expounded in extensive detail later in the Haggadah in the paragraphs beginning with “Tzei u’lmad — Go and learn”. There, each detail of the descent to Egypt, the servitude, the affliction, and the miracles of the Exodus are described and explained at length. What does “*Avadim Hayinu*” at the beginning of the Haggadah add to the lengthy narration later?
3. What is the reason for the injunction, “*V’afilu kulanu chachamim* — Therefore, even if we were all wise... we would nevertheless be obligated to recount the story of the departure from Egypt?” What purpose does relating the story serve for those who already know it?
4. What is the reason for the word “and” in the phrase “*V’afilu kulanu chachamim* — AND even if we were all wise”? The word “and” denotes an addition to a previous idea. For example, had the Haggadah previously mentioned that every person is required to recount the story of the Exodus, then the phrase “and even if we were all wise...” would have been appropriate. However, this phrase is the first mention of any such obligation! The statement should instead read: “Even if we were all wise”, without the unnecessary conjunction “and”. (Footnote: The addition of the word “and” is not insignificant. The Tosafos in tractate Menachos 40, s.v. Techeles, infers significant Halachic ramifications from the addition of the word “and” in a similar phrase “and even...”.)
5. Many commentators have questioned the insertion of the paragraph “*Amar Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah* — Said Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah” in the Haggadah. Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah said, in the name of ben Zoma, that the daily obligation for every

Jew to mention the Exodus from Egypt applies at night as well as the day (his opinion is the law, and we fulfill this law every night when we recite the Sh'ma). Obviously, this dictum applies to every night of the year, not just the night of Passover. Why, then, is it included in the Haggadah? What relevance does it have to Passover more than all other nights? (Footnote: The commentators have suggested that Passover night indeed differs from all other nights, for on Passover there is an additional mitzvah to elaborate upon the story of the Exodus. Their suggestion, however, does not answer the question. The mitzvah to elaborate is not an obligation, but merely a meritorious deed. The Haggadah itself states that this elaboration — one of the unique features of Passover night — is only a commendable addition to the year-round obligation to mention the Exodus. The obligation to recount the story of the Exodus remains the same on Passover night as on every other night. Therefore, the question remains, how does the night of Passover differ from all other nights with regard to the obligation to mention the Exodus?)

6. Why did the compiler of the Haggadah insert the paragraph "*Yachol m'rosh chodesh* — One might think that the obligation to recount the story of the departure from Egypt begins from the first day of the month of Nissan" between the paragraphs of the Four Sons, and "*Mit'chilah Ovdei Avodah Zarah Hayu Avoseinu*"? The paragraph "*Yachol m'rosh chodesh*" expounds the reason for the timing of the obligation to recount in detail the story of the Exodus on Passover night and not earlier. This discussion has no connection with either the preceding or following paragraphs.
7. Why did the compiler of the Haggadah place the paragraph "*Rabban Gamliel haya omer* — Rabban Gamliel used to say" between the paragraphs "*Kammah Maalos Tovos*" and "*B'chol Dor va'Dor*"? The statement of Rabban Gamliel, that one must recite specific statements about the Paschal offering, matzah, and maror, has no connection with either the preceding or following paragraphs.  
Moreover, it would have been more appropriate after the paragraph "*Yachol m'rosh chodesh*", which concludes with the words, "...at such a time when the matzah and the maror are in front of you", for these are two of the three features which Rabban Gamliel instructs us to discuss.
8. Rabban Gamliel says that "whoever does not explain the following three things at the Pesach festival has not fulfilled his obligation, namely: Pesach, Matzah, and Maror". From where does Rabban Gamliel learn his rule? (See Tosafos in Pesachim 116a, s.v. V'amartem. There are a number of difficulties with Tosafos' answer. See Malbim Haggadah.)
9. Why did the compiler of the Haggadah place the paragraph "*B'chol Dor va'Dor* — In every single generation" after the paragraph "*Rabban Gamliel haya omer* — Rabban Gamliel used to say"? One paragraph has no connection with the other. "*B'chol Dor va'Dor*" discusses the obligation for every person to consider himself as if he personally left Egypt, whereas "*Rabban Gamliel haya omer*" discusses the obligation to recite the three specific phrases of Pesach, matzah, and maror. Furthermore, the compiler of the Haggadah should have placed "*B'chol Dor va'Dor*" BEFORE "*Rabban Gamliel haya omer*", because the paragraphs which precede "*Rabban Gamliel haya omer*" list the abundant acts of kindness God performed for the Jewish people, and they mention the obligation to praise and thank God for His benevolence. Therefore, it would have been appropriate to place "*B'chol Dor va'Dor*" — which discusses the obligation for every person to view himself as if he personally received God's acts of kindness — immediately after the list of those acts!
10. The above-mentioned paragraph states, "*B'chol Dor va'Dor* — In every single generation one is obligated to look upon himself as if he personally had gone forth out of Egypt." The problem is that this concept has already been presented at the beginning of the Haggadah! In the paragraph "*Avadim Hayinu*" we read, "And if the Holy One, Blessed be He, had not taken our fathers out of Egypt, then we, our children, and our children's children would still have been subjugated to Pharaoh in Egypt."  
Why is this single concept stated twice, and why is there such a lengthy interruption between the two statements?
11. Why did the compiler of the Haggadah place Hallel, the verses of praise and thanksgiving to God, after the paragraph "*B'chol Dor va'Dor*"? Is there any reason behind the proximity of these paragraphs?
12. Why is this book called the "Haggadah"?  
The word "Haggadah" comes from the verb "L'haggid", which means "to tell". A more appropriate verb would have been "L'sappeir", "to relate" or "to recount", which appears in many places, such as in the verse, "In order that you relate (l'sappeir) in the ears of your children" (Exodus 10:2), as well as in the Haggadah itself, "We would nevertheless be obligated to recount (l'sappeir)..." and, "They were relating (m'saprim) the story of the departure from Egypt..."  
Therefore, this book should have been named "Sippur", and not "Haggadah".

These questions — and many others — paint the picture of a jumbled text compiled in no meaningful order, a clutter of unconnected paragraphs in confusing disarray. The lack of coherence glares at us so blatantly that we become accustomed to the confusion, and after just a few hours of it each year we return it to the shelves with faith that at least the person who put it together knew what he was talking about.

Of course, we all know that it is inconceivable that one of the most important books of Jewish observance would follow no meticulous order, or at least no order which the ordinary reader could not discern, follow, and learn from. What is the order behind the Passover Haggadah, and what did our Sages want to teach with it?

## ***Let us begin with the basics.***

Step One. On the first night of Pesach, every Jew is required to perform five mitzvot. Two are required by the Torah: (1) To eat matzah (Shemos 12:18); (2) To recount the story of the Exodus from Egypt (Shemos 13:8). The other three are rabbinical ordinances: (1) To drink four cups of wine; (2) To eat maror; (3) To recite Hallel, the psalms of praise.

Because of their status as Torah commandments, the mitzvah to eat matzah and the mitzvah to recount the story of the Exodus stand out as the central motifs of the Pesach Seder. We fulfill the mitzvah to eat matzah, of course, by our actual consumption of matzah. We drink wine, eat maror, and recite the passages of Hallel to fulfill the three rabbinical mitzvot of the evening. But how do we fulfill the mitzvah to recount the story of the Exodus?

For this mitzvah we have the Haggadah. Although we commonly refer to the entire book as the Haggadah, the term “Haggadah” technically refers to the middle part of the Haggadah, or what we commonly call the “Maggid” section. Since this section is where we fulfill the mitzvah to recount the story of the Exodus, it is upon this section that our discussion is focused.

Step Two. The source for the obligation to recount the story of the Exodus is the verse (Exodus 13:8):

*V'higadita l'vincha ba'yom ha'hu Leimor, Ba'avur Zeh Asah Hashem Li B'tzeisi M'Mitzrayim.*

And you shall relate to your child on that day, saying: “It is because of this that Hashem acted for me when I came forth out of Egypt.”

Although there are other verses in the Torah which command us to recount the story of the Exodus, this is the only verse which requires us to tell the story regardless of whether or not we are prompted by a child's question. The other verses command us to tell the story only if a child asks about the Exodus. Since the commandment of this verse, however, applies whether or not a child asks, it serves as the source for the mitzvah of Pesach night for every Jew to tell the story of the Exodus from Egypt.

Step Three. Since this verse is the source for the mitzvah to recount the Exodus and, therefore, the basis for the Haggadah, the compiler of the Haggadah composed its content and order to correspond with the phrases in the verse *V'higadita*.

Step Four. This “Source Verse” has six parts:

1. And you shall relate to your child
2. On that day
3. Saying
4. It is because of this
5. Hashem acted for me
6. When I came forth out of Egypt

The Haggadah, too, is divided into six sections, corresponding to these six phrases. Through the lens of this simple assumption we will begin to see the true colors and pattern of this marvelous masterpiece we call the Haggadah.

## **The First Section**

### ***And You Shall Relate To Your Child — V'higadita l'vincha***

The first eight paragraphs, beginning with “*Avadim Hayinu*” and concluding with “The son who does not know how to ask”, were placed at the beginning of the Haggadah to correspond with “*V'higadita l'vincha — And you shall relate to your child*”, the first phrase of the Source Verse. Each paragraph contributes an essential element to describe the words “*V'higadita l'vincha*”, “And you shall relate to your child”.

When we read the paragraph of “*Avadim Hayinu*”, it sounds to us to be the beginning of the story. Indeed, many commentators on the Haggadah maintain that the paragraph “*Avadim Hayinu*” is a narrative account, the first episode in the saga of our slavery in Egypt. However, if we step back and view “*Avadim Hayinu*” in the broad perspective with the entirety of the Haggadah, we will see that it is, in fact, not part of the story of the Exodus. (Footnote: It is so widely accepted to be a narration that the custom has evolved to preface the recitation of “*Avadim Hayinu*” by saying, “The answer to the four questions of *Mah Nishtana* is as follows...”.)

The easy-to-make misinterpretation arises from the innuendo of the first twelve words of “*Avadim Hayinu*”, which certainly do sound like a story:

We were slaves unto Pharaoh in Egypt, and Hashem our God took us out from there with a strong hand and an outstretched arm.

Aside from these few words, however, nothing else in this paragraph, or the following seven paragraphs, even slightly resembles a narrated story. We find no story until we come to the paragraph “*Mit'chilah Ovdei Avodah Zarah Hayu Avoseinu*” (nine paragraphs later!). But now we are left with a question. If “*Avadim Hayinu*” is not telling us part of the story, then what is it telling us? The answer has profound implications.

The sentence, We were slaves unto Pharaoh in Egypt, and Hashem our God took us out from there with a strong hand and an outstretched arm, is not the beginning of the story of the Exodus, but is the declaration of the fundamental reason WHY we are all obligated to recount the Exodus story.

BECAUSE we were slaves unto Pharaoh in Egypt, we are obligated to tell the story of the Exodus and to express our enormous gratitude to our Redeemer, for had He not brought us forth from Egypt we would still be there. “*Avadim Hayinu*” is the reason WHY we have the mitzvah to tell the story; it is not the story itself.

Let us delve deeper into this idea by asking another basic question: Why must every Jew recount the Exodus, why must even the wisest sages tell the story, each and every year, which everyone already knows?

At first thought, we could say that the reason for this obligation is for everyone to recognize that our lives and our freedom come from Hashem. Through remembering the Exodus, we are reminded that it is Hashem’s omnipotently open hand which gives us everything we need. This renewed recognition inspires us to strengthen our love, awe, and service for God.

It is unquestionable that this is a seemingly explanation for the obligation to recount the Exodus. But still — there seems to be something more to this mitzvah, for if its purpose was solely to enhance our devotion to Hashem, then why are the wise, holy, righteous Jews, who are constantly cognizant of Hashem’s greatness, obligated to recount the Exodus? There must be some greater purpose behind this mitzvah. It is this purpose which will give us profound insight into the Mitzvah of recounting the Exodus.

Indeed, recounting the events of the Exodus is not solely for our own spiritual benefit. But it is also for our children’s. For when we recount the Exodus, we not only ensure that we do not forget what God did for us, but we also guarantee that our children and future generations will recall the Exodus and realize that their lives, too, were fundamentally affected by that cataclysmic event, and they will, as a consequence, acknowledge their personal responsibility to praise and thank the Almighty. To ensure this perennial awareness of what God did for His people, every Jew is commanded to tell and elaborate upon the events of the Exodus, regardless of his wisdom and knowledge, for it is not only for his benefit, but for the benefit of the future generations of the Jewish people.

If particular individuals had been exempted from this obligation, it would have been conceivable for the Exodus to be forgotten. Any Jew acquainted with history would exempt himself by justifying that he already knows the historical events. Exempt from telling the story of the Exodus, he would leave his children ignorant of the meaningfulness of their past, and unaware of their purpose for the present and their responsibilities for the future. By requiring every person to recount the Exodus, regardless of his knowledge, the Torah circumvents this problem. The continued consciousness of our collective history and the responsibilities and privileges that it bore is guaranteed.

We now understand the paragraph “*Avadim Hayinu*”. The sole but critical purpose of “*Avadim Hayinu*” is to inform us that the obligation to tell the story of the Exodus falls upon every Jew, even if he already knows it and has no need to retell it. For it is not only for his sake that he must tell it, but for the sake of all following generations. “*Avadim Hayinu*” therefore says:

We were slaves to an oppressive king and to an oppressive nation. Only God, through His miraculous Divine providence, took us out from there. Had God not delivered us, we, our children, and our children’s children would still have been subjugated to Pharaoh in Egypt. All subsequent generations would have been born into the oppression of Egypt. Therefore, since all later generations were also included in the redemption, they are also obligated to praise and thank God for the deliverance from slavery to freedom. In order to ensure that they will be aware of their privileged responsibility, we are all obligated to recount the Exodus “and even if we were all wise”. For that is the failsafe strategem to keep alive the events of the Exodus in the mind and heart of the Jewish people.

Our questions begin to disappear.

- 1) “*Avadim Hayinu*” has an unmistakable purpose and is not out of order in the Haggadah. Since it is not meant to be part of the story but rather the impetus to tell the story, it is appropriately placed at the beginning of the Haggadah, before the telling of the story.  
The statement “And if the Holy One, blessed be He, had not taken our fathers out of Egypt, then we, our children, and our children’s children would still have been subjugated to Pharaoh in Egypt” is not repeating the idea that appears later in “*B’chol Dor va’Dor*”, that we must view ourselves as if we were personally redeemed from Egypt. Rather, it is declaring the purpose for our obligation to recount the Exodus — if not for ourselves, then for our children who were also affected by the event.
- 2) Once we understand that the purpose of recounting the Exodus is not only for ourselves, but for our children and future generations, we can understand why we must recount the Exodus even if we were all wise — “*V’afilu kulanu chachamim*”. The purpose of the recounting is not for us, but for our children. Requiring every individual to recount the Exodus, regardless of his level of knowledge, is the infallible method to ensure that our children are aware of it and its import.
- 3) We now understand why the word “and” was added to “*V’afilu kulanu chachamim* — and even if we were all wise... we would nevertheless be obligated to recount the story of the Exodus from Egypt”. “*V’afilu kulanu chachamim*” is not a self-contained statement, but the corollary of the preceding sentence, “... our children, and our children’s children, would still have been subjugated to Pharaoh in Egypt”. Once we know that the *raison d’être* of the obligation is for the sake of our children, to ensure that they will know that they were redeemed as well, it follows logically that every one of us must recount it, “and even if we were all wise... we would nevertheless be obligated to recount the story of the Exodus from Egypt.”

The Torah itself subtly implied this reason for the obligation when it phrased the command, “*V’higadita l’vincha* — And you shall TELL YOUR CHILD...”, using the verb “tell” and emphasizing telling “your child”. If the purpose was for us and not for our children, the command would be phrased, “*V’zacharta* — And YOU shall remember...”.

The Rabbis, following the Torah's lead that the purpose of telling the story of the Exodus is not only for us but for our children, introduced additional customs for the sake of the children, such as removing the Seder plate before the meal begins, and having the children snatch away the Afikoman. These customs were introduced to capture the attention and interest of the children and to encourage their questions, thereby assisting us to instill in them the awareness of the Exodus.

In conclusion, "*Avadim Hayinu*" is not the beginning of a story, but a pedagogical statement giving the reason why we are obligated to recount the Exodus even if we are all wise. The inclusion of "*Avadim Hayinu*" here is based on the words "*V'higadita*", the first words in the verse which stands as the basis for the Mitzvah of Seder night. "*Avadim Hayinu*" encapsulates the essence of "*V'higadita k'vincha* — And you shall relate to your child": the purpose for recounting the Exodus is for our children to be aware of what God did for us, and for them.

The seven paragraphs that follow are also based on the words "*V'higadita l'vincha*":

"Maaseh B'Rabbi Eliezer" is an example of telling the story "even if we were all wise." Five of the greatest Tannaim, Rabbi Eliezer, Rabbi Yehoshua, Rabbi Elazar ben Azarya, Rabbi Akiva, and Rabbi Tarfon, eminent sages whose minds were immersed in the depths of every realm of Torah, nevertheless elaborated upon the Exodus story throughout the night. They knew that the purpose of the obligation was not solely for the individual, but for ensuing generations — "And you shall relate to your child."

"Amar Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah" is also an important addition to this part of the Haggadah. Although there is an obligation to mention the Exodus every night of the year, the obligation on Passover night is different. Every other night one is required merely to mention the Exodus to himself, whereas on Passover night he must tell the story to someone else, and even if there is no one else present, he must tell the story to himself in order to safeguard against it ever being forgotten.

The paragraphs dealing with the four sons follow, depicting the responses to the questions of the four types of children. These paragraphs appropriately appear in the section of the Haggadah which corresponds to "And you shall relate to your child". The response to the last son, the son who does not know how to ask, is the very verse which is the source for the obligation to tell the story of the Exodus — an appropriate ending to this section of the Haggadah.

## The Second Section

### On That Day — *Bayom Hahu*

After the section which corresponds to the words "*V'higadita l'vincha*" and which describes the obligation to recount the Exodus, comes the section which corresponds to the next words "*Bayom Hahu*", on the day, and which describes the proper time for this obligation.

The Haggadah derives from the words "*Bayom Hahu*" that the obligation of "*V'higadita l'vincha*" — telling about the Exodus — must be fulfilled "on that day", the day "when matzah and maror are in front of you" — i.e. the Fifteenth of Nissan.

Therefore, following the order of words in the Source Verse, "And you shall relate to your child on that day", this is certainly the fitting place for the paragraph "*Yachol m'rosh chodesh*". This answers our sixth question.

## The Third Section

### Saying — *Leimor*

We now come to the third section of the Haggadah, which corresponds to the third phrase "*Leimor* — saying" in the Source Verse. We have seen that the compiler of the Haggadah established the order of the Haggadah based upon the sequence of words in the Source Verse, "*V'higadita...*". We have seen that he placed the description of the obligation to recount the Exodus first, corresponding to the words "*V'higadita l'vincha*". Next, he placed the details of when to fulfill this obligation, corresponding to the next words in the verse, "*Bayom Hahu*". Likewise, the third section corresponds to the third phrase, "*Leimor* — saying", saying, and contains the actual saying of the story of the Exodus.

Not only was the compiler of the Haggadah consistent with the order of words in the Source Verse, but he also achieved a logical progression by first introducing the obligation to recount the Exodus ("*V'higadita l'vincha*"), then instructing when to fulfill this obligation ("*Bayom Hahu*"), and then including the actual fulfillment of the obligation ("*Leimor*").

This section of the Haggadah starts with the paragraph "*Mit'chilah Ovdei Avodah Zarah Hayu Avoseinu*" and continues with "*Tzei u'lmad*". Here, the Haggadah begins its analysis of the verses in Deuteronomy 26:5-8 which describe the history of the Exodus. Each word of these verses encapsulates the essence of the Exodus story — the suffering of slavery, the relief of redemption, and the awesome miracles and wonders which God wrought for our sake. The Haggadah cites each verse and shows how the details of the Exodus are inherent in each word.

Following the elucidation of the verses comes the paragraphs "*Kammah Maalos Tovos*" and "*Al achas kamma v'kamma*". These paragraphs list the bountiful kindnesses God bestowed upon us when He brought us forth from Egypt, when He guided us through the wilderness, and when He escorted us into the Holy Land. They were placed at the conclusion of the recounting of the story of the Exodus because they include additional accounts of God's benevolence which were not mentioned in the verses which the

Haggadah cited, such as God's enriching us with the wealth of Egypt, the splitting of the Sea, the provision of our needs in the wilderness, and additional acts of kindness which the Exodus led to, including the giving of the Sabbath, the receiving of the Torah, the entry into the land of Israel, and the building of the Holy Temple.

In conclusion, the compiler of the Haggadah placed this section — beginning with “Mit'chilah Ovdei Avodah Zarah”, ending with “*Al achas kamma v'kamma*”, and containing the actual telling of the story of the Exodus — as the third section of the Haggadah. It appropriately corresponds to the third phrase of the Source Verse upon which the Haggadah is based: the phrase “*Leimor* — saying” in the verse, *V'higadita l'vincha ba'yom ha'hu Leimor, Ba'avur Zeh Asah Hashem Li B'tzeisi M'Mitzrayim* — And you shall relate to your child on that day, saying: “It is because of this that Hashem acted for me when I came forth out of Egypt.”

## The Fourth Section

### Because of This — *Ba'avur Zeh*

The fourth section corresponds to the fourth phrase, “*Ba'avur Zeh* — it is because of this”, in the Source Verse. With this simple assumption we can answer the seventh and eighth questions.

Rabban Gamliel's rule that one must explain the Pesach, matzah, and maror, corresponds to the phrase “*Ba'avur Zeh*”, which is why the compiler of the Haggadah placed the paragraph of Rabban Gamliel at this point in the Haggadah.

Rabban Gamliel's rule states that if one does not explain these three objects — Pesach (the Paschal offering), matzah, and maror, then one has not fulfilled the obligation to recount the Exodus. What is the source for this rule? His source is none other than the phrase to which this section of the Haggadah corresponds — “*Ba'avur Zeh*”.

How does Rabban Gamliel derive from these words the obligation to recite the explanation of the Paschal offering, matzah, and Maror? Rabban Gamliel reads the verse “*V'higadita*” differently from the common reading. The common translation of the verse is, And you shall relate to your child on that day, saying: “It is because of this that Hashem acted for me when I came forth out of Egypt”.

Rabban Gamliel, however, translates the verse as follows:

And you shall relate to your child on that day, saying: “this is because of what God acted for me when I came forth out of Egypt”.

Rabban Gamliel translates “*Ba'avur Zeh*” as “this is because” or “the reason for this is”, which is indeed an accurate, simple translation of the words “*Ba'avur Zeh*”. The difference between the common way of reading the verse and Rabban Gamliel's way is whether the word “Zeh”, “this”, is the subject or the object of the subordinate clause. Rabban Gamliel learns that it is the subject (“this thing is because”) and not the object (“because of this thing”). To illustrate, it is as if the phrase reads “Zeh Ba'avur” instead of “*Ba'avur Zeh*”, and as if the verse reads, And you shall relate to your child on that day, saying: “This is because of what Hashem did for me when I came forth out of Egypt.”

What does “this” refer to? “This” is the object on the table to which one can point and say, “THIS is because...”, referring to the Paschal offering, the matzah, and the maror.

To summarize, Rabban Gamliel's rule is clearly written in the verse itself: And you shall relate to your child on that day, saying: “This [the Paschal offering, matzah, and maror] is because of what God acted for me when I came forth out of Egypt”. In order to fulfill the obligation of relating the story of the Exodus to one's child, one must also relate the reason for the Paschal offering (“Because the Holy One, blessed be He, passed over the houses of our fathers in Egypt”), the reason for the matzah (“Because the dough of our fathers did not have time to become leavened”), and the reason for the maror (“Because the Egyptians embittered the lives of our fathers in Egypt”). This obligation is part and parcel of the obligation to recount the Exodus, as is evident by its presence in the verse commanding us to recount the Exodus.

This also explains why we must say “THIS matzah” and “THIS maror”, for “this” is the language of the verse, “*Ba'avur Zeh* — this is because”. (Footnote: We do not say “THIS Paschal lamb” because we no longer have the Pesach sacrifice to which we could point and say “this Paschal lamb”. Since the destruction of the second Holy Temple, the text was changed from “This Paschal lamb which we eat” to “The Paschal lamb that our fathers used to eat at the time when the Holy Temple was still standing”.)

## The Fifth Section

### Hashem Acted for Me — *Asah Hashem Li*

After the section of the Haggadah based on the phrase “*Ba'avur Zeh*”, we come to the section based on the next words in the verse, “*Asah Hashem Li*”. These words are the source for the obligation for each person to consider himself as if he personally had been redeemed from Egypt. Therefore, the compiler of the Haggadah placed the paragraph “B'chol dor v'dor”, which discusses this obligation, at this point in the Haggadah following the order of the verse. This answers our ninth question.

This paragraph states, “In every single generation one is obligated to look upon himself as if he personally had gone forth out of Egypt.” The paragraph continues to prove this obligation from the words “*Asah Hashem Li* — Hashem acted for me” in the Source Verse.

We asked that the idea of viewing oneself as having personally left Egypt already appeared at the beginning of the Haggadah in “*Avadim Hayinu* — We were slaves... And if the Holy One, Blessed be He, had not taken our fathers out of Egypt, then we, our children, and our children’s children would still have been subjugated to Pharaoh in Egypt”. We already explained that the purpose of that statement is to explain why every individual is obligated to recount the Exodus “even if we were all wise”. It does not come to express the idea that one must view oneself as having personally left Egypt. For that comes the fifth section of the Haggadah, the paragraph “*B’chol Dor va’Dor*”, which corresponds to the phrase “*Asah Hashem Li*” — the fifth phrase in the Source Verse, “*V’higadita*”.

## The Sixth Section

### When I came forth from Egypt — *B’tzeisi M’Mitzrayim*

The sixth section of the Haggadah begins with the paragraph “*L’phichach* — Therefore we are obliged to avow thanks”, an introduction to the recital of Hallel, the psalms of praise to God for the miracles of the redemption from Egypt.

This paragraph states that we are duty-bound to thank God with abundant expresses of praise and exaltation for all the acts of kindness He bestowed and continually bestows upon us. This paragraph ends with the imperative, “Hallelukah — Praise God!”, a befitting introduction to Hallel.

The recitation of Hallel was placed at the end of the Haggadah because it corresponds to the phrase “*B’tzeisi M’Mitzrayim* — when I came forth out of I Egypt”, the sixth and final phrase of the Source Verse. The Hallel of the Seder commemorates the miracles of the redemption from Egypt and gratefully declares, “*B’tzeis Yisrael m’Mitzrayim* — When Yisrael went forth from Egypt”, echoing the words upon which its inclusion in the Haggadah is based, “*B’tzeisi M’Mitzrayim*”. This answers our eleventh question.

And our final question — why is this book called the Haggadah — has long since disappeared. Since the book’s foundation from beginning to end is based on the words of the verse “*V’higadita l’vincha*”, it is needless to say that the most fitting title for this book is the first word of that verse, “Haggadah”.

## In Conclusion

With a single, clear, simple answer, we have discovered an overwhelmingly logical and organized order in the Haggadah. The order of the Haggadah is the order of words in the verse which stands as the source for one of the Pesach Seder’s, and, indeed, one of the year’s, most important Mitzvos:

*And you shall relate to your child*

*On that day*

*Saying*

*It is because of this*

*Hashem acted for me*

*When I came forth out of Egypt.*