Source Material Cong. Ohel Moshe Wed., 3-25-2020

הגדה של פסח:

אָמַר רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר בֶּן עֲזַרְיָה הֲרֵי אֲנִי כְּבֶן שִׁבְעִים שָׁנָה וְלֹא זָכִיתִי שֶׁתֵּאָמֵר יְצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם בַּלֵּילוֹת עַד שֶׁדָּרְשָׁהּ בֶּן זוֹמָא, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר, לְמַעַן תִּזְכּוֹר אֶת יוֹם צֵאתְךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם כֹּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ. יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ הַיָּמִים. כֹּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ הַלֵּילוֹת. וַחֲכָמִים אוֹמְרִים יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ הָעוֹלָם הַזֶּה. כֹּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ לְהָבִיא לִימוֹת הַמָּשִׁיחַ

*R. Elazar ben Azaryah said: I am like a man of seventy years of age, but I could not merit having the exodus from Egypt recited every night, until Ben Zoma expounded it: “In order that you will remember the day of leaving Egypt all the days of your life.” The phrase “the days of your life” indicates only the days; “all the days of your life” includes the nights as well. But the Sages say: “the days of your life” indicates only in the present world; “all the days of your life” includes the era of Messiah.*

The disagreement here concerned whether or not one is obligated to recite the third *parasha* of the Shema (*Parashas Tzitzis*) at night.

A number of questions arise here:

1. Why was R. Elazar ben Azaryah prevented from reciting the third *Parashas Tzitzis* until Ben Zoma offered his novel exposition?
2. Since R. Elazar ben Azaryah was obviously unaware of Ben Zoma’s exposition until he was informed of it, how then did he know beforehand of the obligation to recite *Parashas Tzitzis* at night?
3. What does the phrase ולא זכיתי (“but I could not merit”) mean? The Talmud tells us that R. Elazar ben Azaryah was not really seventy years old at the time but was in fact only eighteen years of age (he was only in some respects “like a man of seventy years of age”). If so, what is so significant about the fact that a still budding young scholar failed to comprehend a given *Halacha?*
4. What is the core point of controversy between these authorities and how do their respective interpretations fit the pasuk quoted?
5. If the intention of the author of the Haggadah was to prove that one must recite *Parashas Tzitzis* at night, then why not quote the first clause of this source (משנה ברכות י"ז ע"ב) that states categorically: מזכירין יציאת מצרים בלילות, “one recites *Parashas Tzitzis* and thereby makes mention of *Yetzi’as Mitzrayim* at night”?
6. What is the connection between this Mishnah and the rest of the Haggadah? This Mishnah discusses זכירת יציאת מצרים, remembering the Exodus from Egypt, whereas the operative mitzvah at the Seder is סיפור יציאת מצרים, recounting the Exodus from Egypt.
7. Since apparently the point is to mention the view of Ben Zoma, why mention the conflicting view of the Sages at all?
8. How did R. Elazar ben Azaryah win the argument since the Sages continue to disagree with him?

Source Material Cong. Ohel Moshe Thu., 3-26-2020

Haggadah: Commemorating Bitter Experiences

שמות רבה (וילנא) פרשת בא פרשה יט סימן ז:

ז [יג, ב - טז] קדש לי כל בכור, ר' נתן אומר אמר הקדוש ברוך הוא למשה כשם שעשיתי יעקב בכור שנאמר (שמות ד) בני בכורי ישראל כך אני עושה למלך המשיח בכור שנאמר (תהלים פט) אף אני בכור אתנהו כך קדש לי כל בכור, והזהר לישראל כשם שבראתי את העולם ואמרתי להם לישראל לזכור את יום השבת זכר למעשה בראשית שנאמר (שמות כ) זכור את יום השבת, כך היו זוכרים הנסים שעשיתי לכם במצרים וזכרו ליום שיצאתם משם שנאמר (שם /שמות/ יג) זכור את היום הזה אשר יצאתם ממצרים, למה כי בחוזק יד הוציאך ה' ממצרים, ולא יראה לך שאור שבעת ימים, כנגד ז' ימים שבין הגאולה לקריעת ים סוף כשם שבתחלה הם ז' ימי בראשית וכשם שהשבת מתקיימת אחד לז' ימים כך יהיו אלה שבעת ימים מתקיימים בכל שנה ושנה שנא' (שם /שמות י"ג/) ושמרת את החוקה הזאת למועדה מימים ימימה משל למלך שנשא אשה במדינת הים הגיעוה גלים עד שלא נכנסה אצלו א"ל לא תזכרי כל הגלים שעברו עליך אלא אותו יום שפלטת מהם תהא זוכרת אותי עשי אותו שמחה בכל שנה, כך ישראל נגלה עליהם הקדוש ברוך הוא לגאלם וכמה גלים קשים עברו עליהם ועשה להם תשועה לכך הזהירן שיהיו שמחים בהם בכל שנה ושנה שנאמר (תהלים לב) שמחו בה' וגילו צדיקים.

“Sanctify to Me all the firstborn” (Shmos 13:1). R. Nosson said: G-d told Moshe: Just as I have made Yaakov a firstborn, for it says (ibid 4:22): “Israel is my son, My firstborn,” so will I make the King Moshiach a firstborn, as it says (Tehillim 89:28): “I will also appoint him firstborn.” Hence “Sanctify to Me all the firstborn” (emphasis is placed on “all”). Warn Israel that just as I, Who created the world, commanded them to keep Shabbos as a memorial of the work of Creation, as it says (Shmos 20:8): “Remember the day of Shabbos,” so also you will remember the miracles that I performed for you in Egypt and the anniversary of the day of your departure, as it says (ibid 13:3): “”Remember this day you left Egypt.” Why? (Ibid) “For by the strength of G-d’s hand you were brought out from this place.” (ibid, v. 7) “And no chometz will be seen with you,” for seven days, corresponding to the seven days from the Exodus until Krias Yam Suf. Just as there were seven days of creation, and just as Shabbos is observed at the end of seven days, so will these seven days be kept each year, as it says (ibid, v. 10): “You will therefore keep this ordinance in its season annually.” It is like a king who married a wife from a city across the sea, but the waves surged high around her before she arrived at his place. He then said to her: Do not remember all the waves that passed over you, but only the day on which you were saved from them. Then I want you to think of me and make a day of rejoicing each year. So it is with Israel: G-d appeared to them in order to redeem them, but see how many huge waves had passed over them until now. But He produced salvation for them and exhorted them to rejoice on those days annually, as it says (Tehillim 32:11): “Be glad in G-d, and rejoice, you righteous.”

1. My rebbe, Hagaon Rav Moshe Feinstein zt”l
2. Maskel L’Eisan’s question
3. Rav Elazar Simcha Wasserman zt”l
4. Pesach and Tisha B’Av: Kinos # 8, 31, 7,14
5. Machlokes Ramah and Gra: the egg at the Seder

Source Material Cong. Ohel Moshe Wed., 4-1-2020

Anti-Semitism

הגדה של פסח: אֲרַמִּי אֹבֵד אָבִי וַיֵּרֶד מִצְרַיְמָה וַיָּגָר שָׁם בִּמְתֵי מְעָט, וַיְהִי שָׁם לְגוֹי גָּדוֹל עָצוּם וָרָב:

וְעָנִיתָ וְאָמַרְתָּ לִפְנֵי ה' אֱלֹ-הֶיךָ אֲרַמִּי אֹבֵד אָבִי וַיֵּרֶד מִצְרַיְמָה וַיָּגָר שָׁם בִּמְתֵי מְעָט וַיְהִי שָׁם לְגוֹי גָּדוֹל עָצוּם וָרָב:

דברים, 26:5: “Then you shall call out and say before Hashem, your G-d: ‘An Arami tried to destroy my father. (or: A straying, wandering Arami was my father.) He descended to Egypt and sojourned there, few in number, and there he became a nation-great, strong, and numerous.

* Arami: First approach: Avraham, Yaakov, or (lehavdil) Second approach: Lavan
* First approach: humble origins, shepherds, simple economy, no castles or fortresses or farms
* Second approach: connection between Arami oved avi and V’yared Mitzryema

בָּרוּךְ שׁוֹמֵר הַבְטָחָתוֹ לְיִשְׂרָאֵל, בָּרוּךְ הוּא, שֶׁהַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא חִשַּׁב אֶת הַקֵּץ לַעֲשֹוֹת. כְּמָה שֶׁאָמַר לְאַבְרָהָם אָבִינוּ בִּבְרִית בֵּין הַבְּתָרִים.

“Blessed is He Who keeps His promise to Israel, for the Holy One, blessed is He, calculated the end, to fulfill what He had told Abraham at the Bris Ben Habesarim

Jewish history: Hashem’s promises fulfilled, but (seemingly) at a snail’s pace

וְהִיא שֶׁעָמְדָה לַאֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְלָנוּ. שֶׁלֹּא אֶחָד בִּלְבָד עָמַד עָלֵינוּ לְכַלּוֹתֵנוּ אֶלָּא שֶׁבְּכָל דּוֹר וָדוֹר עוֹמְדִים עָלֵינוּ לְכַלּוֹתֵנוּ, וְהַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא מַצִּילֵנוּ מִיָּדָם

This promise has sustained our ancestors and us. For not only one enemy has risen against us to annihilate us; rather, in every generation people rise against us to annihilate us. But the Holy One, blessed be He, saves us from their hand.

בראשית ל"א, כ"ד: וַיָּבֹא אֱלֹ-הִים אֶל לָבָן הָאֲרַמִּי בַּחֲלֹם הַלָּיְלָה וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ הִשָּׁמֶר לְךָ פֶּן תְּדַבֵּר עִם יַעֲקֹב מִטּוֹב עַד רָע

And G-d appeared to Lavan HaArami at night and said to him, “Take heed not to speak good or evil to Yaakov.”

בראשית ל"א, כ"ט: יש לאל ידי לעשות עמכם רע ואל-הי אביכם אמש אמר אלי הישמר לך מדבר עם יעקב מטוב עד רע

“I have the power to wreak evil upon all of you and the G-d of your fathers.”

* Netziv: Lavan would have preferred that Yaakov assimilate during his stay in Lavan ’s house- a gradual destruction of his unique identity, as it were.
* However, when Yaakov decides to leave, Lavan has no choice but genocide and thus the suddenness of his outburst
* “ALL OF YOU” includes Yaakov’s family, Lavan’s own children and grandchildren. Had Lavan been merely jealous of Yaakov’s money as he ostensibly claimed, he would have no desire to destroy all of the members of Yaakov’s camp.
* “AND THE G-D OF YOUR FATHERS” implies a jihad, a holy war against Yahadus: Lavan,in his desire to erase Yaakov’s beliefs also wanted to eliminate all those who believed as Yaakov did. Otherwise, why mention G-d, and why contemplate the destruction of one’s biological children and grandchildren?

Source Material Cong. Ohel Moshe Thu., 4-2-2020

Purpose of Galus Mitzrayim

1. Nedarim 32a: Punishment for Avraham Avenu questioning Hashem: Bemah adah?
2. Sforno Breishis 15:13: Punishment for the sins of Bnei Yisrael in Mitzrayim
3. Three other sources: not a punishment
4. Maasei Hashem (Rav Eliezer ben Eliyahu Ashkenasi): a good thing
5. Rav Moshe Alshich: criticizes #4 (see also Yalkut Shimoni 247)
6. Shemen Hamor: to condition them
7. Kabbala view: to remove zuhama
8. Five other views: Nedarim 32a; Shabbos 10b; Pesachim 87b; Zohar, P. Ki Sisa
9. Galus Mitzrayim preordained
10. Answer: Medrash Tanchuma Vayaishev 4: You knew in advance that I would do so!
11. Purify Klal Yisrael
12. Tribulations to atone for the lack of complete shelamus of our avos

Haggadah: Leave with a Great Reward

1. Wealth of Egypt
2. Avdus worthwhile for physical reward?
3. Spirituality
4. Ayn Mikra Yotzei Meday Peshuto
5. Avraham’s claim
6. Wealth can attract others to the beauty of Torah