

Parsha Ponders

Shevii shel Pesach | April 11, 2023 | 20 Nissan 5783

Recalling the Exodus¹

למען תזכר את-יום צאתך מארץ מצרים כל ימי חיך...

...In order for you to remember the day you left Egypt, all the days of your life²

Besides the Festival of Pesach, where we recount the Exodus at the Seder, there is an obligation to recall the Exodus from Egypt every day³. We fulfill this by saying the third paragraph of Shema both day and night⁴, which mentions the Exodus. Now, the Magen Avraham innovates⁵ that reciting *Shiras HaYam*, the Song at Sea that the Jews sang when the Reed Sea split, fulfills this obligation. Now, at first glance, this seems a little surprising. The Song at Sea was recited *after* the Exodus from Egypt. Why would reciting it be considered recalling the Exodus? The Torah indeed says⁶ to recall *the day* we left Egypt, and the Sea split a week later⁷. Furthermore, the *Midrash* says that part of the obligation of recalling the Exodus is to recall the final plague of the death of the first born. If one didn't say it, they haven't fulfilled their obligation⁸.

Now, there might be a possible resolution to this innovation. The *gemarra* says⁹ that when the Jews went from slavery to freedom, they sang songs of praise to Hashem. Rashi there explains¹⁰ what is the reference to going from slavery to freedom? He says that **at the Exodus** they sang *Shiras HaYam*, the Song at Sea when the Reed Sea split. We see then that Rashi understands that the splitting of the sea is indeed considered part and parcel of the Exodus. Perhaps this is a source for the Magen Avraham¹¹.

Perhaps there's a way to explain this dispute¹². When the Torah says that we have to *remember*, what is the intent? Many would say that it's to focus on exactly what the Torah mentions, which is the *day* that we left Egypt. However, the Magen Avraham had a different understanding of the intent behind remembering. The Torah simply wants us to remember the Exodus from Egypt in general. Anything related to that, even if only somewhat, suffices. Even though technically speaking one could say the splitting of the sea was after the Exodus occurred, but it definitely is in the same vein. Someone who

¹ Based on a *devar Torah* heard from [Rav Yitzy Horowitz](#), from Givat HaMivtar, Jerusalem

² [Deuteronomy 16:3](#)

³ [Ibid](#); [Berachos 1:5](#); [Bach Orach Chaim § 67](#); [Shiltei HaGiborim](#) to [Berachos 12b § 1](#) in the name of *Poskim*. See [Kenesses HaGedolah ad. loc. Hagahos Beis Yosef](#)

⁴ See [Pri Megadim ad. loc. Eishel Avraham § 1](#), who discusses if recalling the Exodus at night is biblical or not

⁵ [Magen Avraham](#) to [Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 67:1](#)

⁶ [Deuteronomy loc. cit.](#)

⁷ [Chasam Sofer ad. loc.](#), in [Teshuvos Chasam Sofer Orach Chaim § 15](#), and in a *teshuva* published in [Yam HaTalmud Otzar Mefarshim § 1](#), the latter brought by his father-in-law [Rabbi Akiva Eiger ad. loc.](#). This question is also posed by [Shulchan Aruch HaRav ad. loc. Kuntres Acharon § 2](#). He writes that although there is a way out of this question, it's difficult to rely on this when we're discussing a biblical *mitzvah*. The [Mishnah Berurah ad. loc. § 3](#) brings the [Chasam Sofer](#) and [Rabbi Akiva Eiger](#), and seems to agree with them

⁸ [Rabbi Akiva Eiger loc. cit.](#), quoting [Shemos Rabbah 22:3](#). However, if one looks there, they'll see that it says the opposite, that if one didn't mention if they **have** fulfilled their obligation

⁹ [Megillah 14a](#)

¹⁰ [Rashi ad. loc. s.v. מעבדות](#)

¹¹ However, see [Turei Even ad. loc. s.v. מה מעבדות](#) who has many questions on [Rashi](#), and explains the *gemarra* differently, that it's referring to the Hallel the Jews said the **first** day of Pesach, the day they left Egypt

¹² [Rav Yaakov Chaim Sofer](#) in [Kenesses Chaim Yad Sofer 2:1](#)

thinks about the splitting of the sea will definitely come to think about the rest of the Exodus story. That's all the Torah expected from us.

We find the Magen Avraham evoked this understanding in another context¹³. The Torah also wants us to recall Amalek's attack against us when we left Egypt¹⁴. Usually we fulfill this obligation by reciting once a year the relevant *parsha* which introduces this command. However, the Magen Avraham says¹⁵ we can fulfill it by listening to the Torah reading on Purim, which describes the actual attack. Many argue on him¹⁶, since that Torah reading is missing the necessary elements that we are supposed to recall. However, according to the above approach, the Magen Avraham understandably isn't bothered by this. By reciting the story, we'll come to recall all the necessary elements¹⁷.

The seventh day of Pesach commemorates the day that the sea split. Our Sages say¹⁸ that Hashem's hand was so clear that even the simple maidservants saw more than even the greatest prophets. May we tap into this day in the proper way, and fully appreciate the miracles that Hashem performs for us each and every day.

Gut Yom Tov and Chag Sameach!

¹³ *Ibid*

¹⁴ Deuteronomy 25:17

¹⁵ Magen Avraham to Shulchan Aruch *Orach Chaim* 685:7 § 1

¹⁶ See Mishnah Berurah *ad. loc.* § 16

¹⁷ Rav Horowitz suggested a third example of this. The Magen Avraham *Orach Chaim* 271:1 says that by reciting the Friday night *Shemoneh Esrei*, a person fulfills their biblical obligation to recite *Kiddush*. Many argue on him (see Beur Halacha *ad. loc.* § מיד. As an aside, the Beur Halacha there cites the Minchas Chinuch (although he only says he "heard" that the latter writes about this), in one of his rare instances where he cites a contemporary authority. See Yeshurun XXXVI p. 218), since it's missing the necessary elements that *Kiddush* is supposed to recall. According to the above approach, his opinion makes sense. However, I proposed that this creates a contradiction in the opinion of Rabbi Akiva Eiger. According to the above, he should disagree with the Magen Avraham's innovation regarding *Kiddush*, and yet we see that he concurs with it (Rabbi Akiva Eiger *ad. loc.*). Either *Kiddush* is somehow different, or a new explanation is necessary for the above dispute. Or, perhaps he agrees in principle with the Magen Avraham, but the *Midrash* he brings showed him that remembering the Exodus is different

¹⁸ Mechilta *Masechta D'Shira* § 3