

Next Year in Jerusalem:

A Brief History of Hope



La Haggadah de la cinquième Coupe (The Haggadah of the 5th Cup). Illustrated by Raymond Moretti (1931-2005)

Shabbat Hagadol 5774
The Jewish Center
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THE TIMES, MONDAY, AUGUST 17, 1840.

CELEBRATION OF THE PASSOVER BY THE JEWS.

A correspondent has furnished the annexed very minute account of this ceremony, which will be exceedingly curious in itself to most of our readers, and has at the same time an evident bearing on the Damascus case. It repels strongly the barbarous notion that human blood, or blood of any kind, is essential to its celebration:—

On the evening preceding the 14th day of the month of Nissan, immediately after the evening service, prior to entering on any occupation whatsoever. It is requisite for the master of every family to search after leavened bread in every place and apartment where leaven is usually kept, gathering all the leaven lying in his way. Before he begins the search he says the following:—

“Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who hast sanctified us with thy commandments, and commanded us to remove the leaven.”

He is not allowed to speak between the blessing and making the search, nor yet during the search; after he has done he secures the pieces of leaven which he has gathered and says—

“All manner of leaven that is in my possession which I have not seen nor removed shall be null, and accounted as the dust of the earth.”

On the 14th day, after the 4th hour, about 10 o'clock in the morning, all manner of leaven must be removed, and that which was gathered the previous evening must be burnt.

On the first two nights the table of every family is decorated thus: the table-cloth being laid as usual, three plates are placed thereon; in one is put three passover cakes; in another the shank-bone of the shoulder of lamb (which is in commemoration of the Paschal lamb) and an egg, both roasted on the coals; the egg to commemorate the offering of the festival; in the third plate is put some lettuce and celery, or chervil and parsley, and a cup of vinegar or salt and water; some take the top of horseradish, which is in commemoration of the Egyptians making the lives of our ancestors bitter, likewise a compound formed of almonds and apples worked up to the consistency of kne, in memory of the bricks and water on which they laboured in Egypt. The table being thus formed, every one at table has a glass, or cup of wine placed before them, and during the night has the glass or cup filled four times. On these nights it is customary to allow even the meanest Hebrew servant to sit at the table during the ceremony; considering, as they were all equally alike in bondage, it is proper that they all return thanks to their God for their redemption.

On their return from synagogue the master of the house says the sanctification of the passover; they then drink the wine of the sanctification, leaning on the left side, after which they wash their hands; the master of the house then takes some parsley or chervil, and dips it into the vinegar or salt water, and distributing some to every one at table, and before they eat it, says the following grace:—

“Blessed art thou, O Lord, our God, King of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the earth.” The master then breaks the middle cake in the dish, and, leaving one half of it there, he lays the other half by for the *opiconis*, which is nothing more nor less than a piece of the Passover cake, and it is that which it is said human blood forms a portion of. He then takes the bone of the lamb and egg off the dish, and all at table lay hold of the dish and say,

“Lo, this is as the bread of affliction, which our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt, let all who are hungry, enter and eat thereof, and all who are necessitous come and celebrate the Passover. At present we celebrate it here, but the next year we hope to celebrate it in the land of Israel. This year we are servants here, but next year we hope to be freemen in the land of Israel.”

They then fill the cup with wine a second time, when the youngest in company asks—

“Wherefore is this night distinguished from all other nights? On all other nights we may eat either leavened or unleavened bread, but on this night only unleavened bread; on all other nights we may eat any species of herbs, but on this night only bitter herbs; on all other nights we do not dip* even once, but on this night twice; on all other nights

* Rabbi Jose, the Galilean, saith, from whence art thou authorized to assert that the Egyptians were afflicted with 10 plagues in Egypt, and upon the sea they were smitten with 50 plagues? To which he answers, in Egypt it says, and the magician said unto Pharaoh this is the finger of God; but at the sea it says, and Israel saw the mighty hand which the Lord smote the Egyptians, and the people feared the Lord, and believed in the Lord and His servant Moses.

Now, Rabbi Jose argues thus:—If by the finger only smitten with 10 plagues, hence it is deducible that in Egypt they were smitten with 10 plagues, and at sea they were smitten with 50 plagues. (This is founded on this argument:—In Egypt, they said this is the finger of God, but at sea it is said, “And they saw the mighty hand.” If by the finger only they received 10 plagues, they must, of course have received 50 by the hand, as it contains five fingers.)

Rabbi Eliezer saith from whence can it be proved that every plague which the Most Holy (blessed be He) brought upon the Egyptians in Egypt consisted of four different plagues? From what is said he sent forth against them, the fierceness of his anger, wrath, indignation, and trouble; also by sending evil angels amongst them. Now wrath is one, indignation two, trouble three, sending evil angels four. Hence it is deducible that in Egypt they were afflicted with 40 plagues, and at the sea they were smitten with 260 plagues.

What abundant favours hath the Omnipresent conferred on us, for if He had but brought us forth from Egypt, and had not inflicted justice on the Egyptians, it would have been sufficient. If He had inflicted justice upon them, and had not executed judgment on their gods, it would have been sufficient. If He had executed judgment on their gods, and had not slain the first-born, it would have been sufficient. If he had slain their first-born, and had not bestowed their wealth on us, it would have been sufficient. If he had given us their wealth, and had not divided the sea for us, it would have been sufficient. If he had divided the sea for us, and had not caused us to pass through on dry land, it would have been sufficient. If he had caused us to pass through on dry land, and had not plagued our oppressors in the midst thereof, it would have been sufficient. If he had plagued our oppressors in the midst thereof, and had not supplied us with necessaries in the wilderness (40 years), it would have been sufficient. If he had supplied us with necessaries in the wilderness (40 years), and had not fed us on manna, it would have been sufficient. If he had fed us with manna, and had not given us the Sabbath, it would have been sufficient. If he had given us the Sabbath, and had not brought us near to Mount Sinai, it would have been sufficient. If he had brought us near to Mount Sinai, and had not given us his law, it would have been sufficient. If he had given us this law, and had not brought us to the land of Israel, it would have been sufficient. If he had brought us to the land of Israel, and had not built the temple, it would have been sufficient.

How much, then, are we indebted for the manifold favours of the Omnipresent conferred on us. He brought us forth from Egypt, executed judgment on the Egyptians and on their gods, slew their first-born, gave us their wealth, divided the sea for us, caused us to pass through on dry land, plagued our oppressors in the midst thereof, supplied us with necessaries in the wilderness 40 years, gave us manna to eat, gave us the Sabbath, brought us near to Mount Sinai, gave us the law, brought us into the land of Israel, and built the chosen holy temple for us, to make atonement for all our sins.

Rabbi Gamliel saith, that whatsoever doth not make mention of three things used in the passover, hath not done his duty (Christian's blood is not mentioned): the paschal lamb, the unleavened cake, and bitter herb.

The paschal lamb, which our ancestors ate during the existence of the holy temple, what did it denote? It denoted that the most Holy (blessed be He) passed over our fathers' houses in Egypt, as is said, (Exod. xii. 27), and ye shall say it is the Lord's passover, because he passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians and delivered our houses. And the people bowed their heads and worshipped.

The master of the house then takes hold of the cake in the dish, and shows it to the company as a memorial of their freedom, and then says, “These unleavened cakes, wherefore do we eat them? Because there was not sufficient time for

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I Questions/Tensions

On Monday, August 17, 1840, The Times of London on page 3 printed a virtually complete English translation of the text of the Haggadah. Needless to say, no newspaper on record had ever done such a thing before. The headline read: “Celebration of the Passover by the Jews” and it was prefaced by the following line:

“A correspondent has furnished the annexed very minute account of this ceremony, which will be exceedingly curious in itself to most of our readers, and has at the same time an evident bearing on the Damascus case.”

Just what was the Damascus case? Why had it caught the attention of an English newspaper? And what was the Haggadah doing on page three four months after Pesach?

We’ll circle back to this puzzle in a few moments, but let me add three other historical questions to the mix. The Seder is defined by fours so let’s jump on that bandwagon and proceed according to the same structure.

Let me start with a question that has to do with hospitality. We all know the story of the five sages in the Haggadah who spent the entire night in Bnei Brak engrossed in the story of the Exodus. R’ Akiva was the rabbinic authority of that city. He was the host and he was joined by four of his colleagues: R’ Eliezer, R’ Yehoshua, R’ Elazar ben Azaryah and R’ Tarfon. Where was Rabban Gamliel? How come he wasn’t invited to R’ Akiva’s seder? I’m not asking simply because they were contemporaries. At least half a dozen times in Shas, this group of rabbis is mentioned and Rabban Gamliel is always one of the gang. Why is he absent on this occasion?

My third question may seem a little technical or even a little anachronistic, so I hope you’ll permit me a little license to share it with you now and justify its relevance in a few moments. If you walk into West Side Judaica or even Barnes and Noble, you’ll find hundreds of Haggadahs. The standard text is of course fairly universal. It’s the layout or the commentary or the illustrations that differentiate one from the next. So each Haggadah has a name. There’s the Sarajevo Haggadah and the Moss Haggadah and the YU Haggadah. The Rambam also wrote a Haggadah. What was the name the Rambam gave to his Haggadah?

Finally: To the topic at hand. In our family, לשנה הבאה בירושלים is one of the most joyous moments of the Seder. Everyone stands up, joins hands, and sings together: לשנה הבאה בירושלים. And yet the inclusion of these three precious words should by no means be taken for granted. You won’t find this phrase in Tanach. You won’t find it in the Talmud. You won’t even find it in the Haggadahs of the Rishonim: Rashi and Rabbeinu Tam and the Rambam and all of their contemporaries never said these words. Where did they come from and what’s the force of this expression on Seder night.

Four questions:

- 1) The Damascus Case: What was it? Why did it capture the attention of the United Kingdom? And why did the words of the Haggadah occupy the pages of the London Times in 1840?

- 2) Why wasn't Rabban Gamliel invited to R' Akiva's seder?
- 3) What did the Rambam call his Haggadah?
- 4) Who coined the phrase בירושלים הבאה and why?

II Rabban Gamliel

What I'd like to do is travel back in time with you to three epochs in Jewish history: the 2nd century Roman Empire; 12th century Spain; and 15th century Austria. My hope is that the journey will not only help us answer the questions I've just articulated, but that it will help us develop a revolutionary way to conceptualize the very idea of Jewish hope.

With this ambitious agenda in mind, let's begin in the years immediately following the destruction of the second Temple in 70CE. The Jewish people were at a crossroads. In the aftermath of the חרבן, what would Jewish life look like? Of course this question had a thousand ramifications. One of them was the holiday of Pesach. In Temple times, Jews would make the pilgrimage to Jerusalem; slaughter the paschal lamb on the 14th of Nissan; and consume it at the end of the Seder meal. But in the absence of the Temple, what would be the character of the Pesach Seder?

What I'd like to suggest is that understanding this context will shed light on why Rabban Gamliel wasn't with R' Akiva on Seder night.

So let me share with a number of clues that will lead us in the direction of an answer.

One may not roast the paschal lamb on a metal spit or on a grill. R' Tzadok said: Once Rabban Gamliel said to his servant, Tavi, "Go ahead and roast the paschal lamb for us on a grill."

2 משנה מסכת פסחים פרק ז משנה ב
 אין צולין את הפסח לא על השפוד ולא על האסכלא אמר רבי צדוק מעשה ברבן גמליאל שאמר לטבי עבדו צא וצלה לנו את הפסח על האסכלא.

There's something very peculiar about this Mishna. The Mishna is written after the חורבן, but of course its authors never hesitate to engage in issues relevant to Temple times. At first glance, this Mishna appears to belong this category. But what makes it so surprising is Rabban Gamliel. It would have been one thing for him to argue about the law. That would have been typical. But Rabban Gamliel does just articulate an academic position. He actually goes ahead and performs what looks like a Korban Pesach! Given that there's no Temple, how do we understand what's happening here?

The next source raises a similar question:

R' Yosef taught: Todos the man of Rome instructed the inhabitants of Rome to eat *a kid with its entrails roasted alongside it* on the eve of Passover. Shimon ben Shetach sent a message: If not for the fact that you were Todos [a man of great stature] I would have excommunicated you for you are feeding members of the Jewish people [what appears to be] sacrificial meat outside the Temple.

3 תלמוד בבלי מסכת ברכות דף יט עמוד א
 דתני רב יוסף: תודוס איש רומי הנהיג את בני רומי להאכילן גדיים מקולסין בלילי פסחים; שלח ליה שמעון בן שטח: אלמלא תודוס אתה גוזרני עליך נדוי, שאתה מאכיל את ישראל קדשים בחוץ!

Mekulas: Its limbs and entrails hanging alongside it as it is roasted. And this is done to commemorate the way it was done in the Temple as it is written (Ex. 12:9): [Do not eat any of it raw or cooked in any water, but roasted,] *head, legs and entrails over the fire*.

4 רש"י מסכת ביצה דף כב עמוד ב
מקולס - כרעיו ובני מעיו תלוין חוצה לו
בצדו כשצולהו, והיו עושין זכר למקדש,
שכתוב בו על כרעיו ועל קרבו.

What's happening here? What is the dispute between Todos and the rabbis? Now, this was Rome and not Jerusalem, but Todos sounds an awful lot like Rabban Gamliel. Even in the absence of the Temple – or maybe because of its absence – he insists on performing a faux korban pesach.

But the rabbis of the generation are outraged! In fact, they are ready to excommunicate Todos for treading too close to sacred territory. The Temple is gone, they say, and it's time to move on.

But there was one rabbi who was absolutely supportive of Todos. And that of course was Rabban Gamliel.

On three matters Rabban Gamliel was stringent and ruled according to Beit Shammai. . . He was likewise lenient in three matters: One may prepare *a kid with its entrails roasted alongside it* on the eve of Passover. The rabbis forbade it.

5 משנה מסכת ביצה פרק ב:ו-ז
שלשה דברים רבן גמליאל מחמיר כדברי בית שמאי. . .
אף הוא אמר שלשה דברים להקל מכבדין בין המטות
ומניחין את המוגמר ביום טוב ועושין גדי מקולס בלילי
פסחים וחכמים אוסרין;

And the sages forbade the *gedi mekulas* because it [too closely] resembled an actual sacrifice and people might say: *It is permitted to consecrate and eat korbanot outside the precincts of the Temple*.

6 רש"י מסכת ביצה דף כב עמוד ב
וחכמים אוסרין. . . ובגדי מקולס - מפני שדומה
לקדשים, ויאמרו: מותר להקדיש ולאכול קדשים
בחוץ.

Rashi explains why the Rabbis were opposed. Once again, squarely after the destruction of the Temple, the Rabbis are opposed to the practice of roasting a whole lamb on Seder night. It too closely approximates the actual Korban and they're worried about a kind of *מראית העין*. People would think that one is permitted to offer a korban outside the precincts of the Temple.

But Rabban Gamliel is fine with it! He has a fundamentally different response to the question of how to observe Pesach in the absence of the Temple. Whether an actual korban pesach – or something that very closely approximates it – Rabban Gamliel wants to keep right on going with the practices of yesteryear. His goal is to preserve the ancient ritual to the fullest extent possible.

There is a very prevalent practice not to eat fire-roasted meat at the Seder. And this emerges directly from these Mishnayot. We don't want anyone to think we're offering up a korban pesach. By and large we follow the opinion of the חכמים. But there's a remnant of Rabban Gamliel's position even in the Mishnah:

In a locale where it is the custom to eat roasted meat on the eve of Passover, one may eat it. In a locale where it is the custom not to eat roasted meat on the eve of Passover,

7 תלמוד בבלי מסכת פסחים דף נג עמוד א
מקום שנהגו לאכול צלי בלילי פסחים -
אוכלין, מקום שנהגו שלא לאכול - אין

one may not eat it.

אוכלין.

And it seems that there were communities in which Rabban Gamliel's sentiment held sway:

The Yemenites still have a tradition to eat roasted meat at the Seder. And Maurizio Molinari, our resident expert on the practices of the Italian Jewish community, once told me that such a tradition exists among Italian Jews as well. Perhaps it dates all the way back to Todos Ish Romi.

But it's the underlying principle that is significant. There is a desire to keep the spirit of Pesach-in-Temple-Times alive and well. If we cannot offer the paschal sacrifice in Jerusalem – and we cannot even eat a lamb roasted in its entirety – let us at least eat roasted meat.

Consider one more piece of evidence that Jews kept on eating roasted meat at the Seder long after the חרבן.

One Haggadah recovered from the genizah contains a unique brachah recited after *Hamotzi*: Blessed are you.... Who commanded our forefathers to eat Matzah, Maror and roasted meat in order to recall his strengths. Blessed are you our Lord, who remembers the covenant.

8 יוסף תבורי, פסח דורות דף קג

ראיה חזקה יותר מצויה בתקופה מאוחרת יותר. הגדה מן הגניזה כוללת ברכה מיוחדת שנאמרה אחרי ברכת המוציא: "ב' א' ה' אלהינו מלך העולם אשר צוה את אבותינו לאכל מצות מרורים בשר צלי אש להזכיר את בורותיו. ב' א' ה' זוכר הברית".²⁶⁷ ברכה זו מעידה בבירור שאכלו צלי כזכר לקרבן הפסח אם כי לא ברור אם אכילה זאת היתה אכילה סמלית, או שכל עבודתם נערכה בבשר צלוי. ברם, מתוך עשרות הגדות שברקתי באוספי

We are content to recite a ברכה on Matza and Maror. But apparently in some communities there was a special ברכה that included Matzah, Maror and roasted meat!

Let me close this section by sharing with you a Tosefta that is eerily similar to the text of our Haggadah, but didn't make the cut.

There was an incident in which Rabban Gamliel and the elders were reclining in the home of Beytus ben Zonin in Lod. And they were involved in [a discussion of] the laws of Passover the entire night until the first rays of light caught their attention and they set off to the house of study.

9 תוספתא מסכת פסחים (ליברמן) פרק י הלכה יב

מעשה ברבן גמליאל וזקנים שהיו מסובין בבית ביתוס בן זונין בלוד והיו עסוקין בהלכות הפסח כל הלילה עד קרות הגבר הגביהו מלפניהן ונועדו והלכו להן לבית המדרש.

There is of course no way to know whether this episode was the same year as the one we read about in the Haggadah. But it's very telling.

R' Akiva and his colleagues argued that in the absence of the actual Korban Pesach – the story of the Exodus would become the centerpiece of the Seder. Now that the Temple is gone, they believed, our main goal is to occupy ourselves with סיפור יציאת מצרים. They spend the night embellishing the narrative of the Exodus.

Rabban Gamliel, on the other hand, had a completely different notion of what should fill the void created by the absence of the Temple. While it is true that we can no longer travel to Jerusalem and offer up a *bona fide* Korban Pesach, that should never stop us from carrying forward the tradition of the paschal lamb to the fullest extent possible.

One cannot say for certain whether Rabban Gamliel declined to come R' Akiva's Seder. But it seems quite likely that he made a conscious decision to be somewhere else – because he staked out a fundamentally different position about what a Seder should like in the post-churban world.

In the end, R' Akiva's position carried the day. The bulk of our Seder is taken up with סיפור יציאת מצרים. At the very end of Maggid we concede one line to Rabban Gamliel:

רבן גמליאל היה אומר כל שלא אמר שלשה דברים אלו בפסח לא יצא ידי חובתו ואלו הן: פסח מצה ומרור.
Whoever doesn't say Pesach, Matzah and Maror hasn't fulfilled their obligation on Seder night.

- But we're not offering the Korban Pesach;
- We're not roasting a גדי מקולס as Todos Ish Romi suggested and Rabban Gamliel supported;
- We're not eating any roasted meat at all;
- And there's barely a discussion of the laws of Korban Pesach.

In the end, we would do well to take note that Rabban Gamliel remained deeply committed to the preservation of Korban Pesach as the centerpiece of the Seder. The Temple may have been gone, but he was unwilling to let go of the Mitzvah that defined the holiday of Pesach.

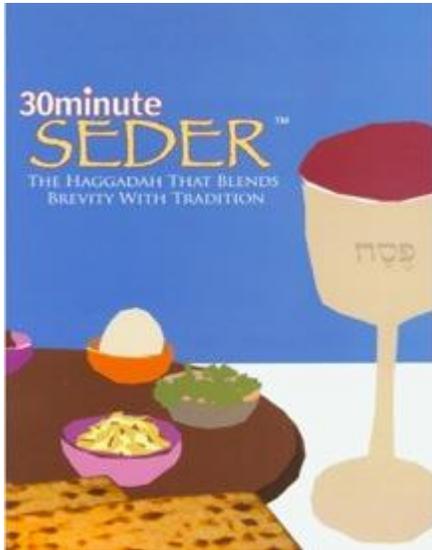
III: The Rambam's Haggadah

Now let's move to our next question: What did the Rambam call his Haggadah?

As I mentioned, there are many Haggadot. One of my favorite titles is: "The 30 minute Seder," the subtitle of which is: "The Haggadah that blends brevity with tradition." But the main problem is that in Judaism... brevity and tradition seldom go together. What I'm wondering is: If you can do the Seder in 30 minutes, how long does Yom Kippur take?

The Rambam organizes the laws of Pesach in his הלכות חמץ ומצה. The section has eight chapters and the Rambam devotes the last chapter to the laws of Seder night. It's a handbook. Before there were Haggadahs with easy-to-follow instructions, there was the Mishneh Torah. Here's when to pour the next cup; here's how many Matzos to hold when you make Hamotzi. All the instructions. And then as an addendum, the Rambam wrote the נוסח ההגדה – the text of the Maggid that you should use at your Seder.

But if you take even a cursory look at chapter 8, you'll notice something bizarre. Just take a look at the first few halachos:



11 רמב"ם הלכות חמץ ומצה פרק ח הלכה א

סדור עשיית מצוות אלו בליל חמשה עשר כך הוא: בתחלה מוזגין כוס לכל אחד ואחד ומברך בורא פרי הגפן ואומר עליו קדוש היום וזמן ושותה, ואחר כך מברך על נטילת ידים ונוטל ידיו, ומביאין שלחן ערוך ועליו מרור וירק אחר ומצה וחרוסת וגופן של כבש הפסח ובשר חגיגה של יום ארבעה עשר, ובזמן הזה מביאין על השלחן שני מיני בשר אחד זכר לפסח ואחד זכר לחגיגה.

They would bring him a prepared table upon which would be maror, another vegetable, matzah, charoset, the body of the paschal sheep and the meat of the Korban Chagigah of the 14th [of Nissan]. But nowadays they bring him two types of meat – one to commemorate the paschal sheep and the other to commemorate the Chagigah.

Now we don't have two pieces of meat; we have an egg and shankbone. But I'm less interested in the substance and more interested in the form. The Rambam toggles back and forth between the Seder as it should be and the Seder as it is.

[Joke] We're in a shtetl outside of Grodno and the year is 1936. Moishe has been living there his whole life, but he sees the writing on the wall and decides to flee. So he sells all his assets, converts them into gold and then melts down the gold into five sets of false teeth. He manages to obtain the necessary documents and circuitously makes his way to the Goldene Medinah. When he arrives at Ellis Island an immigration official asks him a series of question and searches the contents of his bags. When the official sees the 5 sets of false teeth, he asks Moishe why he has so many. Moishe replies, "As you might know, we Traditional Jews have two separate sets of dishes, one for meat and one for dairy. I'm particularly religious so I also need to have separate sets of teeth." The official is confused. "Well that accounts for two sets of teeth. What are the other three for?" "Well," Moishe replies, "we religious Jews also use separate dishes for Passover and I'm so observant that I need two sets of Passover teeth to go with the dishes, one for meat and one for dairy." The official is still confused. "You've convinced me that you're a very religious man and I accept that you therefore need four sets of teeth. But what about the fifth set?" "Well, to tell you the truth, mister official," replies Moshe, "every once in a while I like to eat a ham and cheese sandwich."

In the Rambam there's also a set of five where we expected four.

Listen to the Rambam's formulation of the מה נשתנה:

He would ask:

On all other nights...

On all other nights we eat meat that's roasted, boiled or cured; on this night we eat only roasted meat...

12 רמב"ם הלכות חמץ ומצה פרק ח:ב-ג

מתחיל ומברך בורא פרי האדמה ולוקח ירק ומטבל אותו בחרוסת ואוכל ד כזית הוא וכל המסובין עמו כל אחד ואחד אין אוכל פחות מכזית, ואחר כך עוקרין השולחן מלפני קורא ההגדה לבדו, ומוזגין הכוס השני וכאן הבן שואל, ואומר הקורא מה נשתנה הלילה הזה מכל הלילות שבכל הלילות אין אנו מטבילין אפילו פעם אחת והלילה הזה

But nowadays, we don't say "on this night we eat only roast meat," for we have no [paschal] sacrifice....

שתי פעמים, שבכל הלילות אנו אוכלין חמץ ומצה והלילה הזה כולו מצה, שבכל הלילות אנו אוכלין בשר צלי שלוק ומבושל והלילה הזה כולו צלי. שבכל הלילות אנו אוכלין שאר ירקות והלילה הזה מרורים, שבכל הלילות אנו אוכלין בין יושבין בין מסובין והלילה הזה כולנו מסובין.

בזמן הזה אינו אומר והלילה הזה כולו צלי שאין לנו קרבן, ומתחיל בגנות וקורא עד שגומר דרש פרשת ארמי אובד אבי כולה

This goes on for virtually the entire chapter. We really should be able to point to the Korban Pesach, but in our day, we can't do that. We really should say the bracha הפסח אכילת הפסח, but in our day, we can't do that. . .

The Rambam's seder is set up as a Temple Seder. It's our practice that is exceptional. In the absence of the Temple, we have no choice but to make accommodations.

What I want to argue is that the Rambam preserved the same sentiment as Rabban Gamliel. He's fantasizing about the time we could really offer up the Korban Pesach as in times past.

He concludes Maggid with the second cup – the second up wine with a bracha that we find in our Haggadahs:

Blessed are You, our Lord, King of the universe, who freed us and our fathers from Egypt, and brought us here to this night to eat Matzah and bitter herbs. So our Lord and Lord of our fathers, may You bring us to celebrate other holiday and festivals in peace, rejoicing in the building of Your city and happy in serving You. There may we be able to eat of the offerings and Paschal lambs whose blood is place on the side of Your altar for acceptance. May we thank You with a new song of our liberation and for saving our lives. Blessed are You our Lord, who redeemed Israel.

13 רמב"ם הלכות חמץ ומצה נוסח ההגדה
ברוך אתה ה' אלהינו מלך העולם אשר גאלנו וגאל את אבותינו ממצרים והגיענו ללילה הזה לאכול בו מצה ומרורים כן ה' אלהינו ואלהי אבותינו יגיענו למועדים ולרגלים אחרים הבאים לקראתנו לשלום שמחים בבנין עירך וששים בעבודתך ונאכל שם מן הזבחים ומן הפסחים שיגיע דמם על קיר מזבחך לרצון ונודה לך שיר חדש על גאולתנו ועל פדות נפשנו, ברוך אתה ה' גאל ישראל.

But in the Yemenite manuscripts, the brachah concludes: גואל ישראל! Not that God redeemed us in the past; but that he's redeeming us in the present!

Because the Rambam is dreaming – hoping – for the time when we'll be able to observe the Pesach Seder as it was meant to be observed – in Jerusalem eating the Korban Pesach.

He prefaces his Haggadah with the words:

The text of the Haggadah as practiced by the Jewish people in exile is this:

14 רמב"ם הלכות חמץ ומצה נוסח ההגדה
נוסח ההגדה שנהגו בה ישראל בזמן הגלות כך הוא:

The Rambam called his Haggadah the **Diaspora Haggadah**. It's second rate; suboptimal; non-ideal. It's the Bedieved Haggadah: The Haggadah I use here in exile because I have no choice in the matter. Were the Temple standing, this text would be outmoded and utterly useless.

Like Rabban Gamliel 1000 years before him, the Rambam was trying desperately to grab hold of as much of the Pesach experience as possible – constantly referring to the Temple and the Seder as it was – and will be – performed in its most ideal sense.

IV: Zecher L'Mikdash

We've resolved two of our questions. Rabban Gamliel wasn't with R' Akiva because he was busy eating roasted meat and studying the laws of Korban Pesach. And the Rambam, sympathetic to Rabban Gamliel's position, formulated his Haggadah and his code of law in such a way that his readers could not help but feel the tangible absence of the Temple and our inability to celebrate the Pesach Seder as it was meant to be observed.

I want to argue that Rabban Gamliel and the Rambam weren't just clinging to a bygone past. They were actually anticipating a messianic future.

The Rambam took a page right out of Rabban Gamliel's playbook. We should always be thinking about the rebuilt Temple and our capacity to offer up the Korban Pesach as it's meant to be. And if we can't actually do it or approach doing it in some form or fashion, at the very least we have to talk about it.

The Talmud tells us that one of the questions each of us will be asked when it's time for us to meet our maker is צפית לישועה. Did you yearn for the redemption? Rabban Gamliel and the Rambam weren't just yearning for it; they were trying to live in such a way that would be prepared for it when it came.

The prophet Jeremiah famously said:

Erect markers; set up signposts. Keep in mind the highway, the road that you traveled. Return maiden Israel. Return to these towns of yours.

15 ירמיהו פרק לא:כא
הציבי לך ציננים שמי לך תמרורים שתי לבך למסלה דרך
הלכת שובי בתולת ישראל שבי אל עריך אלה:

When you're exiled from the land and you have to make your way to a new home in גלות, leave a trail behind you. Put up signposts so that – when the time is right – you'll be able to find your way back.

The Torah itself predicted there would be times when we would be banished from our land, but it insisted that we take the Mitzvos no less seriously in exile.

16 Take heed to yourselves, lest your heart be deceived, and ye turn aside, and serve other gods, and worship them; **17** and the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and He shut up the heaven, so

16 דברים פרק יא
(טז) השמרו לכם פן יפתה לבבכם וסרתם ועבדתם אלהים אחרים והשתחיתם להם:
(יז) ותרה אף יקנוק בכם ועצר את השמים ולא

that there shall be no rain, and the ground shall not yield her fruit; and ye perish quickly from off the good land which the LORD giveth you. **18** Therefore shall ye lay up these My words in your heart and in your soul; and ye shall bind them for a sign upon your hand, and they shall be for frontlets between your eyes.

יִהְיֶה מִטֶּר וְהִצְדַּמָּה לֹא תִמַּן אֶת יְבוּלָהּ וְאֲבֻדְתֶּם
מְהֵרָה מֵעַל הָאָרֶץ הַטֹּבָה אֲשֶׁר יְקֻוּם נְתוּן לְכֶם:
(יח) וְשִׁמְתֶם אֶת דְּבָרַי אֵלֶּה עַל לִבְכֶם וְעַל
נַפְשְׁכֶם וְקִשְׂרְתֶם אֹתָם לְאוֹת עַל יְדֵיכֶם וְהָיוּ
לְטוֹטְפוֹת בֵּין עֵינֵיכֶם:

Place these words: Even after you have been exiled you should be *marked* with Mitzvot. Lay Tefillin, affix Mezuzot, etc. so that they will not be foreign to you when you return. This is what [Jeremiah] says: *Erect markers...*

17 רש"י דברים פרק יא פסוק יח
ושמתם את דברי - אף לאחר שתגלו היו מצויינים
במצות, הניחו תפילין, עשו מזוזות כדי שלא יהיו לכם
חדשים כשתחזרו. וכן הוא אומר (ירמיה לא, כ) הציבי
לך ציונים:

The Mitzvot are our signposts. As Rashi says – there will be a time when you’ll return to the land. And when that time arrives, don’t be left ill-prepared. The vocabulary and the grammar of the Torah should be at the tips of your tongues and the knowledge of its mitzvot at your fingertips – so that you’ll be ready to spring in to action when that time comes.

The goal is to create ציונים – signposts that will lead us back to ציון.

We look to the future and anticipate it and practice for it so that when the redemption does come, we’ll be prepared.

Rabban Gamliel and the Rambam weren’t just trying to hold on to a broken past; they were trying to stay prepared for the redemptive future.

It’s a concept the rabbis called זכר למקדש.

Zecher l’mikdash means we do something the way it was done in the Temple.

- On Chanukah we light a menorah in the south part of the shul – just the way it was done in the Temple.
- We eat the Hillel sandwich – matza and marror wrapped together – because that’s the way it was done in the Temple.
- We read Parshas Shekalim before Rosh Chodesh Adar because that’s when it was read in the time of the Temple.
- The list goes on.

But Zecher l’mikdash isn’t backward looking. Whenever you find an example – and we have a few of them at the Seder – the idea is not to mimic the past out of a sense of nostalgia. We re-create our closest approximation of the Temple so that when it’s rebuilt, we’ll be ready.

From where do we know that we commemorate the Temple? R. Yochanan said: For the verse states (Jeremiah 30:17) *But I will bring healing to you and cure your wounds, says the Lord. Though they called you “Outcast: Here is Zion; no one seeks her out.” That no one seeks her out implies that we should seek her out.*

18 תלמוד בבלי מסכת סוכה דף מא עמוד א
גמרא. מנא לן דעבדינן זכר למקדש? אמר רבי יוחנן: דאמר קרא (ירמיהו ל) כי אעלה ארכה לך וממכותיך ארפאך נאם ה' כי נדחה קראו לך ציון היא דרש אין לה, דרש אין לה - מכלל דבעיא דרישה.

It's so powerful. No one is thinking about Tzion. No one is inquiring after her well-being. She's bereft and forlorn. Think about her. Make Jerusalem a part of your lives so that when the time comes we'll be ready to return.

Prof. Yosef Tabory puts this so beautifully in describing the early post-churban practices that were so reminiscent of the Temple.

It was necessary to find alternatives [like these] to demonstrate that the destruction of the Temple didn't mean the destruction of Judaism, and to sustain hope the Temple would soon be [re-]built.

20 יוסף תבורי, פסח דורות דף צד
היה צורך למצוא תחליפים כאלה כדי להראות שאין בחורבן הבית משום כיליון היהדות, וכדי לקיים את התקווה שמהרה ייבנה בית המקדש.

A tourist is visiting the Biblical Zoo in Jerusalem. When he gets to the lion exhibit, he notices that there's a lamb sitting right alongside the lion. He's so excited, that he asks to speak with the zookeeper. "This is just extraordinary. The lion and the lamb lay together. It's the fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy! How ever did you do it?"

"It's really not that complicated" the zookeeper says. "Every morning we put in a new lamb."

My point is this: Rabban Gamliel and Rambam are of a kind. They are both oriented toward the notion of **למקדש**. What Rabban Gamliel accomplished through action, the Rambam accomplished through words. They share a deep and abiding hope that the Temple will be rebuilt. They insist that we go through the motions of the past not just to remember the past, but to prepare for the future – to build our spiritual muscles – so that when the messianic redemption comes, we won't be caught off guard.

V: לשנה הבאה בירושלים

Now I want to transition and I want to look with you for a moment at how the phrase **לשנה הבאה בירושלים** has been variously appropriated over the generations.

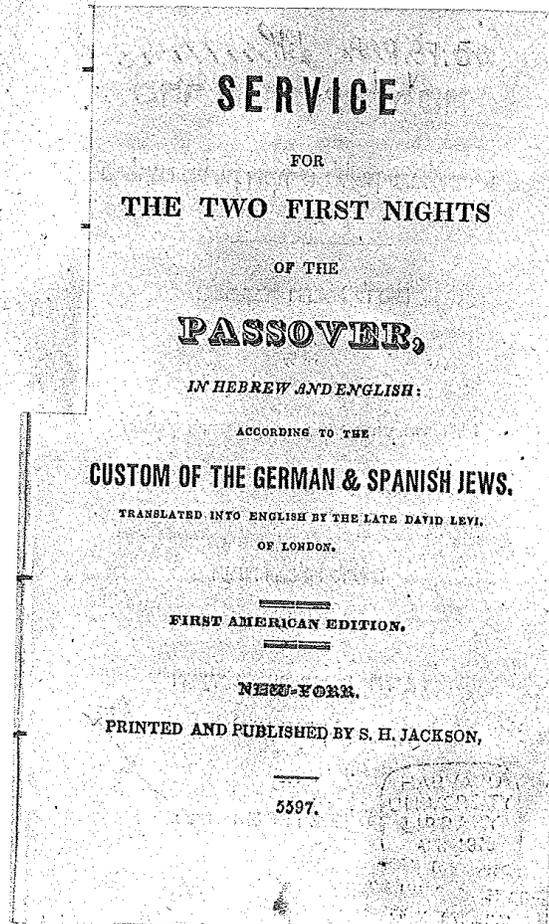
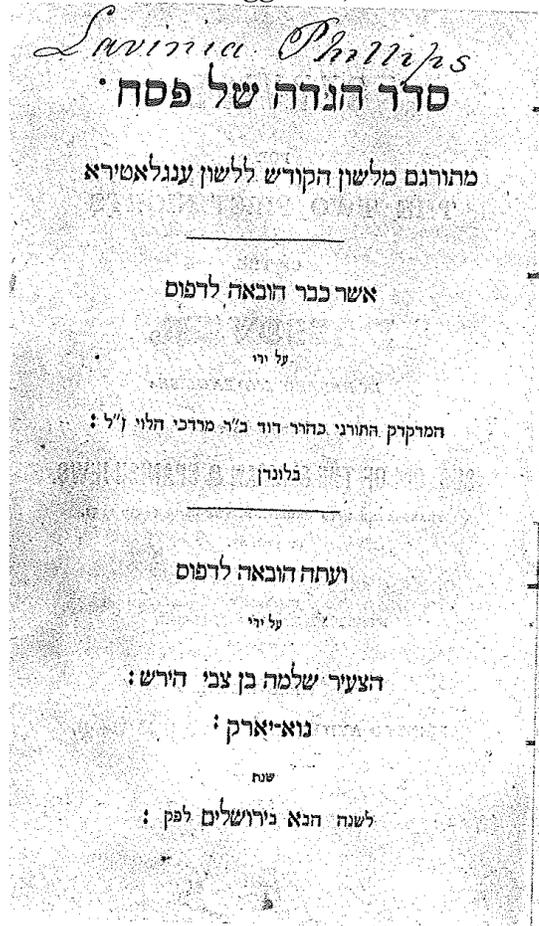
Source 21 is the first bilingual Haggadah to appear in the US in 1837. If you look at the year on the English side of the page, you'll see that it says 5597. On the left side, it should say **תקצ"ז** – 5597. But what does it say? **לשנה הבאה בירושלים**.

1. How bizarre to have this phrase instead of the year.
2. Notice, too, that there's a first grade grammar error. It's not **ה-ב-א**. It should be feminine: **ה-ב-א-ה**.
3. And why is the **א** enlarged and the **ב** reduced?

It's a gematria. The gematria of **בירושלים** is 598. If you drop the **ב** and add the **א** from the previous word, you get 597 –corresponding to the year: 5597.

The publisher may have demonstrated how clever he is. But **לשנה הבאה** has been stripped of its meaning, it's been misspelled and reduced to serving as a placeholder for the year of publication.

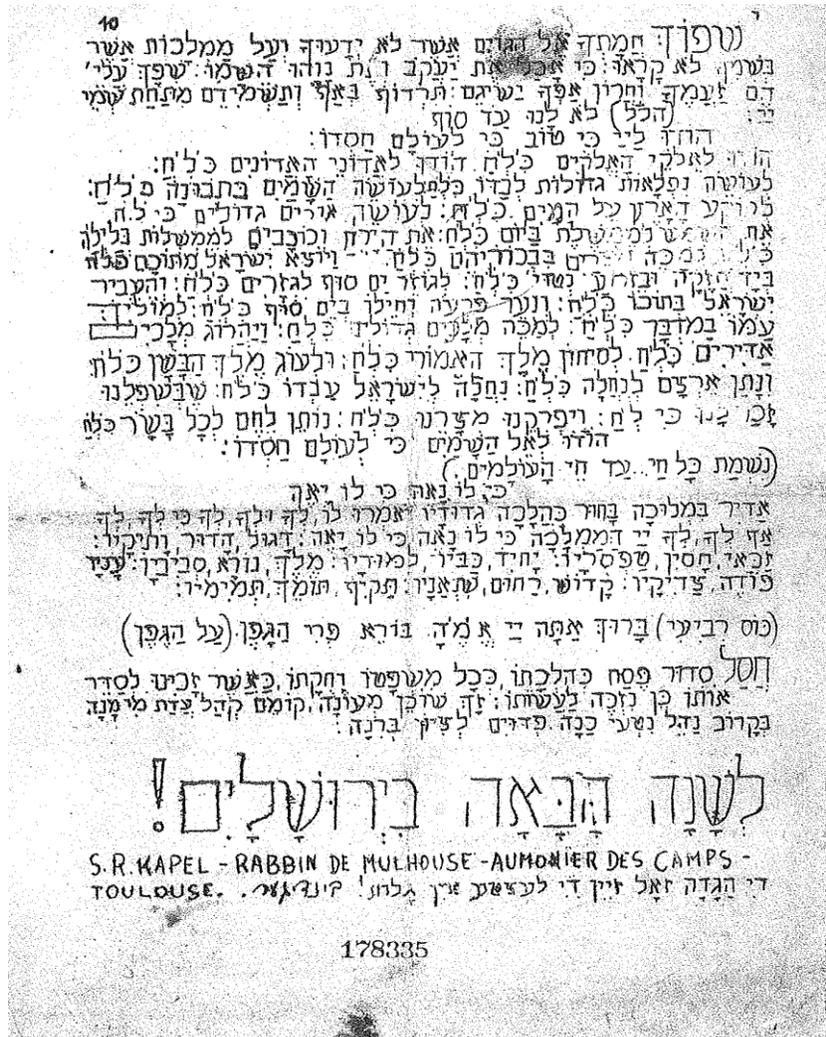
21 The First American Haggadah, 1837



Now let's look at something a little more uplifting:

The next source is a handwritten Haggadah from 1941. France had already been occupied by the Germans. See the final line in Yiddish:

Die Haggadah soll sein die letzte in Galus: This Haggadah should be the last in Exile. All kinds of hopes for deliverance and salvation get wrapped up in לשנה הבאה בירושלים.



21a Haggadah handwritten by Rabbi S.R. Kappel, Rabbi of Mülhausen, France, 1941

And on the cover of your handouts I've reproduced an extraordinary illustration by an artist named Raymond Moretti who passed away just a few years ago. The letters of Yerushalayim actually create the mast of a ship that's taking people to Israel. There's much more here and of course there are dozens of further examples.

My point is simply to demonstrate to you how over the ages לשנה הבאה has become code for anything and everything. It could be a Gematria. It could mean hope; it could be about mashiach; it could be figurative or could be literal.

But I want to go back to the origins of the phrase. If we can tease out the history that led to its emergence, we'll have identified an indispensable message about hope itself.

What I'd like to suggest this morning is that לשנה הבאה adds another dimension to our narrative of hope. We tend to lump everything together. Mashiach should come. We should be redeemed speedily in our days. לשנה הבאה בירושלים אמן.

But I actually think something much more subtle is going on. Everything we've seen up until this moment points in the direction of messianic hope – the utopian future. That's what Rabban Gamliel was getting at in the 2nd century. And that's what the Rambam was getting at in the 12th century. But with your permission, I want to shift gears. I want to make one more stop with you and that's in the 15th century.

What's the origin of לשנה הבאה בירושלים? By the 16th century it's very popular. You'll find לשנה בירושלים in lots of 16th century Haggadahs. But before that time, it's almost entirely absent.

I actually haven't found any scholars who have taken up this issue, so the best I can do is propose a speculative theory:

The earliest source for לשנה הבאה בירושלים is in a book called Sefer Haminhagim which was compiled by an Austrian rabbi named Isaac Tyrnau at the beginning of the 15th century. Unfortunately we know very little about Tyrnau. We have some correspondence of his from the year 1420 so we can place him in the first half of the 15th century.

We recite the blessing *borei peri ha-gafen* and drink the majority of the cup's contents while reclining and then recite the blessing *al hagefen* [as is customary]. And then we say *Next year in Jersualem* and *Chasal Siddur Pesach*, etc.

22 ספר המנהגים (טירנא) ליל הסדר ד"ה ולא יתנמנמ
ולא יתנמנמ בין אכילת אפיקומן ולא יאכלנו בב' מקומות. ונוטל מים אחרונים ולא יברך על נטילת ידים לפי שהן חובה (ד) משום סכנת מלח סדומית. וי"א דווקא המברך יטול מים אחרונים. (ה) ומוזגין כוס שלישית לברכת המזון. (ו) ויחזור אחר ג' לזימון. וטוב הוא גם משום הודו שאחד קורא וב' עונין. ויברך בורא פרי הגפן ושותה רוב רביעית בהסיבה [שמאל]. ומוזגין כוס רביעי ואומר עליו שפוך והלל וכו'. ואין חותמין ביהללך רק אחר נשמת וישתבח וחותמין בחי עולמים כי למה לי לחתום תרי זימני. ומברך בורא פרי הגפן, ושותין רוב רביעית בהסיבה ומברך אחריו (ז) ברכה מעין ג' כדפ"ל. ואומרים לשנה הבאה בירושלים וחסל סידור וכו'.

Notice by the way, that this is different from the order we have in our Haggadahs. חסל סידור פסח is a piyut written by R' Yosef Tov Ilem in the 11th century. And at some point we appended the phrase לשנה הבאה בירושלים to this piyut. But as Tyrnau has it, it's independent.

And you can see a 16th century Haggadah from Prague in which לשנה הבאה is actually recited prior to חסל סידור פסח. It's actually inserted prior to the 4th cup.



22a Prague Haggadah 1527

The question is: Why would it pop up now? Our first impulse is naturally to assume that it's a response to some kind of oppression. But the Middle Ages are littered with expulsions and massacres. Was there something specific going on in 15th century Austria that would have given rise to this kind of expression?

Let me set the context by starting with a responsum by R' Israel Isserlein, the author of the Terumat Hadeshen.

With regard to your question about making Aliyah to the Holy Land and to the Holy City (may it be speedily rebuilt) – as to whether it is a mitzvah at this time – even if one is learned: Regrettably, since we do not have groups of young people and learning there, you should know that it is certainly praiseworthy and laudable to live in the Holy Land and how much more so in the Holy City – both in regard to the next world and to this world... However we have heard several times that there are Jews from Arab lands there who are terrible people. They're informers and they persecute and harass Ashkenazim who are observant.

More than that. It's difficult to earn one's livelihood there and great is the wickedness of the Ishmaelites. Therefore [anyone intending to go to Palestine] should weigh his physical state and financial means and choose his path with fear of God and the observance of Mitzvot – for what more can we do?

23 הרב ישראל איסרלין, בעל תרומת הדשן, פסקים וכתבים ס' פח

מהו
שכתבת לי עוד מ
מעלייתך לארץ נבי
ולעיר הקדש שיבנה במהרה בימינו אי
מטה הוא עתה אפילו תלמיד חכם ה
הואיל ואין לנו בעונות קמץ גמורים ו
ותלמוד תורה לשם דע לך דכודאי שנת
גדול ומעלה יש לו לאדם הדר בארץ
ישראל וכל שכן בעיר הקדש לתועלת
לעולם הבא וגם לעולם הזה אמנם שמענו
כמה פעמים שיש לשם בני ברית מ
מערביים נחשבים לרשעים גמורים מוסרים
מפורסמים והם טורדי' ומבללים האשכנזים
שהם שומרי תורה וגם כי המזונות דחוקים
ומנומנמים לשם מאר ופרווסים קשים מי

חבל לעמוד בכל זה מלבד גדול רשעת ה
הישמעאלים אשר לשם לכן כל איש ישער
בעמנו בהשגת נפשו וממונו באיז' דרך מכל
לעמוד ביראת השם ובשמור מטתו כי זה
כל האדם -

What's clear from this responsum are two things:

First, Jews in Austria were interested in getting to Palestine.

Second, turning that ambition into a reality was no small matter.

In fact, at the behest of Franciscan monks, Pope Martin V even issued a papal decree in 1428 prohibiting sea captains from carrying Jews to Palestine.

But around this time – and again the dates are hard to pin down – but we're in the first half of the 15th century, a traveler named Isaac Zarfati, of French origin but born and educated in Germany, addressed a letter to the Jews of Germany and Austria and called on them to leave their lands. Zarfati was living in Turkey in the time. Listen to his words.

24 Letter of Isaac Zarfati, 15th century

"O Israel, wherefore sleepest thou? Arise, and leave this accursed land forever!"

I have heard of the afflictions, more bitter than death, that have befallen our brethren in Germany -- of the tyrannical laws, the compulsory baptisms and the banishments, which are of daily occurrence. I am told that when they flee from one place a yet harder fate befalls them in another. I hear an insolent people raising its voice in fury against a faithful remnant living among them; I see its hand uplifted to smite my brethren. On all sides I learn of anguish of soul and torment of body; of daily exactions levied by merciless oppressors. The clergy and the monks, false priests that they are, rise up against the unhappy people of God and say: 'Let us pursue them even unto destruction; let the name of Israel be no more known among men. . . . For this reason, they have made law that every Jew found upon a Christian ship bound for the East shall be flung into the sea.

Brothers and teachers, friends and acquaintances! I, Isaac Zarfati, though I spring from a French stock, yet I was born in Germany, and sat there at the feet of my esteemed teachers. I proclaim to you that Turkey is a land wherein nothing is lacking, and where, if you will, all shall yet be well with you. The way to the Holy Land lies open to you through Turkey.

What the letter amplifies is the notion that the Jews of central Europe in the 15th century are thinking about traveling to Palestine, but they recognize it is very difficult to get there.

25 Prof. Maren Frejdenberg, "Rabbi Israel Isserlein, His Circle and Thoughts on the Holy Land," Jews and Slavs vol. 6 pg. 113.

immigrants. This could be explained by the connections by correspondence of r. Isserlein and his circle and by the fact that in the early 15th century (regrettably, we do not know the exact date), traveling to Palestine had become a topic of the day. In any case, it is obvious that the idea of pilgrimage to Palestine during the period under consideration long ago had ceased to be an abstract concept and transformed into a feasible enterprise.

Either because there was a glimmer of hope or because Jews desperately sought one, they inserted the words *לשנה הבאה בירושלים* into the Haggadah. They weren't dreaming of messianic times. They were dreaming the simple dream of being able to visit the Holy Land – which had become a destination so difficult to reach.

לשנה הבאה expresses a hope that's much more pragmatic, much more tempered, much more realistic.

There is a possibility for partial redemption – a better tomorrow. A vision of the chance to see the Golden City, even if Mashiach will not be there to greet you.

As Prof. Yosef Haym Yerushalmi once put: There is such a thing as interim hope. It's not an all-or-nothing proposition.

VI Conclusions

Let me try to start to tie things together. If you take away one message from this talk, it should be this:

Our tradition offers us two types of hope. Rabban Gamliel and the Rambam give voice to what we might call utopian hope – a hope that Mashiach will come, the Temple will be rebuilt and we'll once again be able to observe our Mitzvot in their most ideal and pristine form.

But *לשנה הבאה* reminds us that there is also interim hope. *לשנה הבאה* has been transformed a thousand times, but at its core it signals to us that hoping for Mashiach is not the only type of hope available to us.

And in fact clinging exclusively to messianic hope can come at a cost.

Listen to the words of the pre-eminent historian Gershom Scholem who devoted so much of his career to thinking about and writing about the messianic idea in Judaism:

26 Gershom Scholem, *The Messianic Idea in Judaism*, pg. 35

which lead each of its manifestations *ad absurdum*. There is something grand about living in hope, but at the same time there is something profoundly unreal about it. It diminishes the singular worth of the individual, and he can never fulfill himself, because the incompleteness of his endeavors eliminates precisely what constitutes its highest value. Thus in Judaism the Messianic idea has compelled a *life lived in deferment*, in which nothing can be done definitively, nothing can be irrevocably accomplished. One

Sometimes, Scholem argues, perfect is the enemy of the good.

Of course we need both. We can never abandon our hope that Mashiach, a scion of בית דוד will redeem the Jewish people, restore our Temple and usher in a new epoch for humankind. This is a core tenet of our faith; we daven for it every day; and so many of the mitzvos we perform here in our unredeemed world are designed to prepare us for that great moment.

But neither can we live lives deferred. There's a second type of hope that's much more pragmatic, much more tied to human agency that needs to animate how we see the world and how we live our lives. And that type of hope is best encapsulated by the words לשנה הבאה בירושלים.

Let me circle back to where we began with the Times of London.

To make a long story short, a blood libel erupted in Damascus, Syria in February, 1840. A group of Jews was thrown into prison and accused of having murdered a Franciscan friar for ritual purposes. In the end, thanks to the intervention of Sir Moses Montefiore, most of the group was eventually freed. For months, the Damascus Affair gripped the attention of the West. Prior to its resolution, The Times of London set about setting the record straight by printing the full text of the Haggadah. The idea was to “repel strongly the barbarous notion that human blood, or blood of any kind, is essential to its celebration.” Here's the Haggadah. See for yourself how postposterous the notion of the blood libel really is.

Interestingly, לשנה הבאה doesn't appear in the newspaper's translation. But stunningly – even absent this reference – the notion of Jewish hope was not lost on the editors. Allow me to share with you the arresting words that appeared in an editorial just days after the Haggadah was published:

“The Jews, although bereft of their Temple, their city, and their country, have never ceased to be a people. In the East they are found scattered, wandering, oppressed, despising and despised, cultivating a peculiar literature, divided into hostile sects, cherishing hopes ever disappointed and never abandoned.”

Perhaps, the paper suggests, philanthropists and enlightened statesmen should consider whether this remarkable people should not be granted a national home of its own.

Sometimes it takes an outsider looking in to notice and remind us that we are – and always have been – a deeply hopeful people.

When the French historian Chateaubriand visited Jerusalem in the early 19th century he was overcome by emotion on beholding the small Jewish community there: This people, he wrote, “has seen Jerusalem destroyed seventeen times, yet there exists nothing in the world which can discourage it or prevent it from raising its eyes to Zion.”

Don’t think for a moment that Judaism is a religion about ancient rituals and past triumphs. Yes – the past animates us – but we are equally (if not more) interested in the hope and promise of our future.



27 JDC Seder Plate
Distributed in Displaced Persons Camps
Spring, 1948

Have a look at source 27. I want thank Ted Comet for bringing this to my attention. This is really extraordinary. In the spring of 1948 the JDC ran a massive Passover campaign to try to help the thousands of Jews who were still in displaced persons camps. This was the Seder plate that the JDC distributed *en mass*. Can you make out the inscription at the bottom? It says בשנה הזאת בירושלים – this year in Jerusalem. In the wake of the Shoah who could wait any longer? Not next year. This year. 1948. And כך הוה – so it was.

In this generation that’s living the 2000 year old dream of bearing witness to the re-birth of the Jewish State, how could our hearts be anywhere else? Now – as we express our hopes that Israel will be blessed with peace both within her borders and beyond them – we do so with the knowledge that so much more than hope is within our control.

**28 Yosef Haym Yerushalmi, “Israel – The Unexpected State,” in The Faith of Fallen Jews
pg. 92**

“History is always open – for better or for worse. Certainly conditions can become worse. But it also means that no matter how grim the situation may appear at any time, it can always change for the better in unforeseen ways. Messianism is not the only possible form of human hope.”

As a practical matter, maybe we’ll be in Jerusalem next year and maybe we won’t be. But we have to want it. We have to express not only the dreams that are so big and so distant that they don’t really move us, but also the achievable goals and hopes that are within the grasp of our own human agency.

Maybe they’re literal; and maybe they’re figurative. But we all have hopes – for ourselves, for our families, for the Jewish people and for the Land of Israel. This year at your Seder table – as you think about your place in the unfolding story of Jewish history and Jewish destiny – give them a voice.

History is always open.

More often than not, the only thing that stands between hope and its realization is us.

I wish each and every one of you a **הג כשר ושמח**.
לשנה הבאה בירושלים

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