Singing while crossing the sea

PESACH AND HALLEL

One of the most important Mitsvot of the Pesach is the recitation of the Hallel. The Hallel, for example, marks the official conclusion of the Seder. The Hallel is also intimately connected with the last day of Pesach, *shebi'i she Pesach*, that we will celebrate tonight and tomorrow.

First, we need to remind ourselves that this Holiday, the Seventh-day of Pesach, commemorates a very special event in the history of the Jewish people. After we left Egypt, Pharaoh chased us with his army. We were in the desert, trapped, facing the sea, a seemingly catch-22. Pharaoh and his army got closer, feeling that we were lost. And we were indeed desperate! People cried and complained to Moshe saying: Why did you take us out to Egypt? To get us all killed? Moshe prayed to HaShem. And then, we witnessed the greatest miracle of all times: the splitting of the sea. We crossed the sea, and when the Egyptians came after us, HaShem closed the sea on them. After we were saved and once outside the borders of Egypt, we sang the famous Song of the Sea, or Shirat haYam. All this is more or less known, but what not everyone knows is that WHILE crossing the sea, the people of Israel, also sang a song. And what was that song? The Hallel.

WHAT IS THE HALLEL?

The Hallel is the official Jewish prayer of praise to HaShem. It consists of the recitation of six Psalms of Tehillim, from Psalm 113 to Psalm 118. These Mizmorim –religious poems– express our deepest gratitude and recognition to the Creator for all the miracles He did and He does for us. According to Ribbi Eliezer, the Psalms of the Hallel were recited for the first time while the people of Israel were crossing the sea (□□□ □□ □□□□□ □□□□). As we walked between the two columns of water (can you visualize this?!). Seeing and experiencing the most extraordinary miracle, we manifested our amazement and gratitude, in a spontaneous explosion of songs and praises to HaShem, reciting the Hallel. According to other Hakhamim, although the origin of the Hallel goes back to that special

moment, the final words of these Psalms were formulated, edited, and written by King David, and incorporated into the book of Tehillim to be recited for generations to come during Pesach and during the Holidays related to Yetsiat Mitsrayim, the Exodus from Egypt, that is: Shabu'ot and Sukkot. The rabbis then added, Rosh Chodesh, Chanuka, and in our days: Yom haAtsmaut.

THE CONTENT OF THE HALEL

Psalm 113, the first Psalm of Halel, invites us to praise HaShem (Hallelu-y-ah) reminding us that HaShem (113: 7): *"Raised the poor from the dust and lifted the needy, who looked for food in the garbage (113: 8) … elevating him, and making him sitting among nobles, among the princes of His people. "* This is a clear allusion to Pesach: for centuries, we were enslaved and humiliated in Egypt, to the point that to survive we fed on the food we found in the garbage of the Egyptians. HaShem rescued us from this lowest situation, protected us in the desert, gave us a beautiful and prosperous land and showered us with His blessings … and now in Pesach, we are free, as we show in the Seder, sitting like nobles (reclining) and celebrating our redemption with festive food and wine. The nation of Israel, the "childless mother" whose boys were killed by the Egyptian tyrant, is now celebrating with all her children around the Seder table.

The next Psalm 114 is considered along with Psalm 107 one of the 2 official Passover Psalms: This beautiful Psalm mentions 4 great miracles:

When we were rescued from Egypt, a people with a barbaric tongue.

The opening of the Sea when we left Egypt and the opening of the Jordan river when we entered the promised land

The moment of HaShem's revelation to his people, when he gave us the Tora.

When HaShem provided us with water, and all other needs, in the desert.

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