

“Pour out Your wrath . . .”  
The Mekhilta of Rabbi Ishmael and the Passover Haggadah:  
A Search for Origins and Meaning  
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Although the theme of the Passover Seder revolves around the redemption from Egypt, the Haggadah is not squeamish when it comes to recalling—or anticipating—the destruction of Israel’s enemies. For example, after *Dayyenu*, the traditional Haggadah draws upon a passage from the Mekhilta of Rabbi Ishmael, a late second century midrash, for a discussion about the number of plagues that the Egyptians suffered at the Red Sea. One rabbi argues for fifty plagues, another for two hundred, and a third for two hundred and fifty! The wish for vengeance is palpable. Perhaps the most provocative such passage in the Ashkenazi Haggadah comes between the Grace after Meals and the conclusion of the Hallel (Psalms 115-118). We drink the third cup of wine, fill the Cup of Elijah, open the door for the herald of the Messiah, and recite the biblical verses below:

Pour out Your wrath upon the nations that do not know You, upon the governments which do not call upon Your name. For they have devoured Jacob and desolated his home (Psalms 79:6-7). Pour out Your wrath on them; may Your blazing anger overtake them (Psalms 69:25). Pursue them from under the heavens of the Lord (Lamentations 3:66).<sup>2</sup>

Is this a call for divine vengeance, pure and simple? Why do we recite these particular verses and why do we do so at this particular juncture in the Seder? Although classical commentaries and modern scholars have given diverse answers to these questions, as far as I can tell, none has identified the source of the passage, which I believe is none other than the Mekhilta of Rabbi Ishmael, the halakhic midrash on part of the book of Exodus.<sup>3</sup> As I will suggest, the midrashic context of this passage sheds a great deal of light on these other questions surrounding it. In exploring these matters, it is not my intention to “sanitize” this troublesome imprecation.<sup>4</sup> Rather, I believe that more than solely a cry for revenge, the passage seeks to provide an answer to a theological question that has perplexed Jews over the millennia: Did the Exodus somehow deplete God’s power or desire to intervene in history or will God’s “strong hand and outstretched arm” return again to the stage of history?

Note that this analysis focuses exclusively on the passage above and not on its possible relationship either to opening the door or filling the cup of Elijah. The former practice predates the custom of reciting “Pour out Your wrath . . .” and reaches back to Geonic times, while the latter is not mentioned until the fourteenth century, more than a century after these biblical verses had begun to appear in Haggadot.<sup>5</sup>

We will begin with a review of how classical commentators on the Haggadah and modern scholars have understood “Pour out Your wrath.” We will then consider its origins, inspiration and the significance of its underlying midrashic context as well as how the passage relates to themes expressed in Jewish responses to the Crusades. We conclude with some thoughts about what we can learn about the passage from where it has been placed in the Haggadah, i.e. following Grace after the Meal and just before beginning Psalms 115-118, the concluding psalms of Hallel.

### Commentary on One Foot

The classical Haggadah commentaries<sup>6</sup> on “Pour out Your wrath” are fascinating, but are neither as convincing nor as illuminating as one might hope. One of the more common interpretations (Ritba, Orchot Chayim, Abudarham, and Rashbetz) explains that enjoining God to pour out divine wrath on the nations that do not know God relates to one of the Jerusalem Talmud’s numerous accounts of why we drink four cups of wine at the Seder (Pesachim 10:1, 37b-c).<sup>7</sup> According to the Jerusalem Talmud, the four cups correspond to the cups of retribution—four in total throughout the Bible—that God will give the nations of the world to drink (Jeremiah 25:15; 51:6-7, Psalms 75:9, 11:6). The link between the Haggadah’s “Pour out Your wrath” passage and this interpretation from the Jerusalem Talmud seems to rest on the fact that both passages contain a reference to “wrath” and “nations.”

But if those who added “Pour out Your Wrath” to the Haggadah intended to make a connection between the invocation of divine wrath and the Jerusalem Talmud’s four cups of retribution, why wouldn’t they have chosen the very verses the Yerushalmi cites? Why choose four completely different verses, none of which refers to cups or even wine?

Nor do other commentaries address the question of why we recite these particular verses at this precise juncture. Orchot Chayim (Jacob Hakohen of Lunel, 13<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> century) simply observes that by this point in the Seder we’ve fulfilled many mitzvot and recited many blessings and in so doing we have demonstrated that in fact we *do* call upon and acknowledge God—as if our activities during the Seder draw a bright line between us and those who do not acknowledge God. Isaac Ben Moses of Vienna (1180-1250, Or Zarua) notes that “We have mentioned the Egyptians many times [during the Seder] and one who mentions an evil one must curse him. Therefore we open with ‘Pour out Your wrath.’”<sup>8</sup>

Even Rashbetz (Rabbi Shimon ben Tzemach Duran (1361-1444) one of the commentators who explains “Pour out Your wrath” as an allusion to the cups of retribution that God will cause the nations to drink, goes on to express doubts about this interpretation. He notes that there is no good reason for saying “Pour out Your wrath” after the third cup of wine as opposed to any of the others. He goes on to suggest that placing the passage here avoids the dangerous practice described in the Talmud (Pesachim 110a) of carrying out various activities in pairs, i.e. drinking two cups of wine. Rashbetz holds that reciting “Pour out Your wrath” between the third and the fourth cups somehow eliminates the danger of pairing cups of wine. It is as if by doing so we are

drinking three cups and then one cup rather than two sets of two cups each. This illustrates the lengths to which commentators felt they had to go in order to explain the particular placement of this passage in the Haggadah. Rashbetz also asserts that because the night of Passover is a “night of guarding” (Ex. 12:42) we have no fears of a calamity against us, since God will pour out his wrath against the nations and not upon us. And this, he concludes, is why “Pour out Your wrath” precedes Psalm 115 which begins with the words, *lo lanu lo lanu*, usually rendered ‘not to us’ or ‘not for us,’ but which can also be taken as “not upon us.” According to Rashbetz, first we ask God to bring wrath to the nations that do not acknowledge God and then we ask God not to bring it upon us.

Abarbanel also links “Pour out Your wrath” to Psalm 115 and says that the entire psalm revolves around the passage. When the psalm says, “Why should the nations say, ‘Where, now, is their God?’” (Ps. 115:2) it refers to “the nations that do not know You” and that “have devoured Jacob” (Ps. 79:6-7). Abarbanel interprets this verse in Psalm 115 in a manner that comes very close to my understanding of “Pour out Your wrath:” “Why do You want the nations when they see our troubles and wretchedness to say, ‘Where is their God whom they say did such wonders for them long ago? Perhaps he no longer has any power or ability to save them as in former times.’”<sup>9</sup> For Abarbanel, “Pour our Your wrath” is a dire warning to the nations in Psalm 115 who doubt God’s power.

The Maharal of Prague connects “Pour out Your wrath” to the psalm that follows it, but for different reasons. As we will discuss later, he notes that the Talmud (Pesachim 118a) indicates that Psalm 115 refers to the war of Gog and Magog that will precede the Messianic era. He then cites Ezekiel 38:18 which describes God’s coming to Israel’s rescue: “In that day, when Gog sets foot on the soil of Israel—declares the Lord God—My raging anger shall flare up (*chamati b’api*).” This verse includes two expressions of anger (*chamah* and *af*) which both appear in “Pour out Your wrath.” This is one of the few commentaries on our passage that provides a justification for its content, at least insofar as its language echoes that of Ezekiel. The question is that if the goal had been to allude to the war of Gog and Magog, why didn’t the Haggadah simply quote the relevant verses from Ezekiel?

The Vilna Gaon similarly connects “Pour out Your wrath” to the psalm that follows it, a psalm that also refers to Israel’s redemption. He says that the righteous will not be elevated until the wicked are cursed. Thus we recite “Pour out Your wrath” upon the wicked before Psalm 115 which speaks of God’s remembering and blessing Israel.

One of the great modern scholars of the Haggadah, E. D. Goldschmidt, took a related approach in explaining “Pour out Your Wrath” as an introduction or heading of sorts to the second section of Hallel (Psalms 115-118).<sup>10</sup> “Pour out Your wrath” inveighs against the nations that do not know God, and Psalm 115 condemns those who worship idols of silver and gold.

Summing up their reading of classical commentaries and Goldschmidt’s view on this passage, the Safrai’s conclude: “The explanations seem forced and hard to accept. Even the suggestion of an outstanding scholar [Goldschmidt] . . . is not very convincing.”<sup>11</sup> The

connection between these particular verses and the four cups of wine seems weak. Many commentators try to create a link between “Pour out Your Wrath and Psalm 115. But if this had been the goal, it would have made sense to choose a verse that actually includes more of the same language as Psalm 115. Ironically, Psalm 79, the very source of “Pour out Your wrath,” includes what would have made a perfect segue: “Let the nations not say, ‘Where is their God?’ Before our eyes let it be known among the nations that You avenge the spilled blood of Your servants” (Psalm 79:11). The phrase “Let the nations not say, ‘Where is their God?’” also appears in the second verse of Psalm 115.<sup>12</sup>

### Origins and Inspiration

In exploring the origins of the Ashkenazic Haggadah’s “Pour out Your wrath,” we must briefly pause to consider the evolution of the passage. In the medieval period many different versions circulated. Some quoted only the first verse (the Italian version), some the first two (the Sephardic version), while others included as many as a dozen verses interspersed among the four verses that we now find in the Ashkenazic passage. The Mahzor Vitry (eleventh century) seems to be oldest source containing a version of “Pour out Your wrath” and it includes some ten verses.<sup>13</sup> Some argue that the custom began with just the first verse to which others were added.<sup>14</sup> If so, the Ashkenazic version represents one such aggregation and it is appropriate to search for its underlying source. It is also possible that the custom began with a large number of verses that over time were differentially sifted by various communities. In that case, the Ashkenazic version is a residuum and we can search for a textual rational that may have shaped it. In either case, we are looking for a source that may have guided the hand that created our passage.

Modern scholars of the Haggadah have nothing to say on this score.<sup>15</sup> For example, a recent study of our passage concludes that these verses attest to the medieval Ashkenazic concept of messianic redemption which was to be preceded by God’s destruction of the “nations.” But this analysis makes no effort to explore the genesis of the passage itself.<sup>16</sup>

I believe the Mekhilta of Rabbi Ishmael, a tannaitic, halakhic midrash compiled in the late second century, provides this source. This particular section of the Mekhilta comments on a verse from the Song at the Sea: “In Your great triumph You break Your opponents; You send forth Your fury, *teshalach charonkha*, it consumes them like straw’ (Ex. 15:7). Says the Mekhilta:

*Teshalach charonkha*—You *sent* forth Your fury, is not written here, rather You *will* send forth your fury in the future to come. As it is written, “Pour out Your wrath upon them; may your blazing anger overtake them” (Psalms 69:25). And it is written, “Pour out Your wrath upon the nations . . .” Why? “. . . Because they have devoured Jacob, have devoured and consumed him, desolated his home” (Jeremiah 10:25).<sup>17</sup>

As is often the case in midrashic literature, this passage uses a kind of short hand with respect to the biblical verses it cites rather than offering complete quotations. Completing the verses cited by the Mekhilta highlights the parallels between the midrash and the

“Pour out Your wrath” passage as it appears in the Haggadah. (The comparison below includes the complete verses to which the Mekhilta refers.)

The Mekhilta of Rabbi Ishmael

Pour out Your wrath upon them; may your blazing anger overtake them (Psalms 69:25). Pour out Your wrath upon the nations that do not know You, upon the clans that do not call upon your name. For they have devoured Jacob, devoured and consumed him and desolated his home. (Jeremiah 10:25).

The Ashkenazi Passover Haggadah

Pour out Your wrath upon the nations that do not know You, upon the governments which do not call upon Your name. For they have devoured Jacob and desolated his home (Psalms 79:6-7). Pour out Your wrath on them; may Your blazing anger overtake them (Psalms 69:25). Pursue them from under the heavens of the Lord (Lamentations 3:66).

Both texts quote Psalm 69:25, though in a different sequence. The Mekhilta uses Jeremiah 10:25 which is virtually identical to Psalms 79:6-7. (For the issue of Psalms 79:6-7 versus Jeremiah 10:25, see below.) Beyond this, the addition of Lamentations 3:66 to the Haggadah is the major feature that distinguishes the sources. We will take up a possible rationale for the Haggadah’s addition of Lamentations 3:66 below.

Because the Haggadah does not quote the Mekhilta verbatim, but simply uses much of its biblical material, the case for a link between the Haggadah and the midrash requires further justification. The argument rests on several considerations. First, it seems that the Mekhilta is the only source in the standard midrashic corpus in which two verses that begin with the word ‘*shfokh*’ have been brought together (Psalms 69:25 and Jeremiah 10:25 in the midrash versus Psalms 79:6 and 69:25 in the Haggadah).<sup>18</sup>

Second, when the Haggadah draws from midrash, it only utilizes tannaitic, halakhic midrashim (e.g. the Sifre on Numbers and Deuteronomy, and the Mekhilta of Rabbi Ishmael), and from among these sources the compilers of the Haggadah drew far more extensively from Mekhilta.<sup>19</sup> This should come as no surprise because the Mekhilta is, after all, a midrash on the Book of Exodus. The compilers of the Haggadah looked to the Mekhilta for the following passages: the Four Children<sup>20</sup>; “*yachol mei’rosh chodesh*”<sup>21</sup>; an opaque midrash on the proper time to hold the Seder; Ben Zoma’s interpretation of “all the days of your life;”<sup>22</sup> as well as the midrashic elaboration (that follows *Dayenu*<sup>23</sup>) of the plagues suffered by the Egyptians at the Red Sea.<sup>24</sup> (The latter appears in the prayer books of the geonim of the ninth and tenth centuries.)<sup>25</sup> In addition, the Mekhilta also provides the source of a relatively late and now common variant attributed to the Ari (1534-1572), the addition of Ezekiel 16:6 to follow Ezekiel 16:7 in the Haggadah’s midrash on the Wandering Aramean.<sup>26</sup> Given the relationship between the Haggadah and the Mekhilta—one that persisted over the centuries—it is not at all unreasonable to view this source as the most likely candidate for having inspired the passage under consideration.

Finally, as we shall see later, the context of the passage from the Mekhilta sheds a great deal of light on both the meaning and placement of “Pour out Your wrath” as it appears in the Haggadah. These were issues that classical commentators tried to address, but without a great deal of success.

We must now comment briefly on the differences between the passages as they appear in the Mekhilta and the Haggadah. As noted, the Haggadah has not simply quoted the Mekhilta in toto. Rather, the Ashkenazic Haggadah as we know it today changes the order of the verses, substitutes Psalms 79:6-7 in place of Jeremiah 10:25 and adds a verse from Lamentations. I suggest that these modifications are not significant enough to undermine the argument that the Mekhilta inspired the Haggadah.

We should not be troubled by the substitution of Psalms for Jeremiah because these verses are virtually identical. Indeed, it is apparent from the writings of some medieval commentators that their Haggadot quoted Jeremiah. The commentaries of Ri ben Yakar (1150-c. 1225), Ritba (1250-1330) and Rashbetz (1361-1444) indicate that their Haggadot included Jeremiah 10:25 rather than the parallel passage from Psalms.<sup>27</sup>

Nor should we worry excessively about the different order of the verses in the Haggadah and the Mekhilta or the addition of Lamentations 3:66. When the Haggadah borrowed from the Mekhilta it did not necessarily do so without modification. As Joshua Kulp observes, “We have noted on several occasions that the Babylonian Haggadah culled material from other places in rabbinic literature, and in nearly every case the earlier traditions were modified.”<sup>28</sup> For example, the Haggadah edited the Mekhilta’s version of the Four Children and in the process replaced a “stupid child” (*tipes*) with a “simple child” (*tam*).<sup>29</sup> With this precedent before them, those in Europe who I believe modified this passage from the Mekhilta and added it to the Haggadah would likely have felt free to change the order of the verses and to add another verse as well.<sup>30</sup> The order of the verses may have been changed for a simple reason. The Mekhilta begins with “Pour our Your wrath upon *them*.” The passage in the Haggadah begins “Pour out Your wrath upon *the nations*.” Within a liturgical context the Haggadah’s approach certainly makes more sense because it begins by clearly identifying the target of divine wrath, whereas the Mekhilta begins with only a nebulous “*them*.”<sup>31</sup>

In addition to the order of the verses, the number of biblical verses also differs. The Ashkenazi Haggadah includes four verses whereas the Mekhilta brings only two (although Mekhilta covers the same content as the first three of the Haggadah’s four verses). If we imagine an “editor” of the Ashkenazi Haggadah deliberating about how many verses this imprecation ought to include, we should not be astounded by the choice of four, a number with obvious resonance in the Haggadah.

### The Midrashic Context

The midrashic passage in the Mekhilta we are exploring comes from a tractate in that source that explicates the Song at the Sea, the song Moses and the Israelites sang upon

safely crossing the Red Sea and witnessing the destruction of Pharaoh's army. The song celebrates the zenith of God's redemptive might in the story of the Exodus. The tractate begins with an assertion that recurs numerous times throughout its ten chapters: The Song should not be understood as referring merely to a one-time historic case of divine salvation but also to subsequent instances of God's redeeming role in history and to the ultimate messianic redemption. Behind this assertion lies an implicit question. Did the Exodus exhaust the reservoir of capacity for redemption or were there ample reserves for God to act in the future?

The midrash begins its argument in its comment on the first word in the Song at the Sea, *az*, 'then.' It notes that *az* can refer to "the past and sometimes to what is to come in the future." It cites four examples from scripture in which *az* points to the past and seven that look to the future. As if the seven to four plurality were not enough, the discussion concludes with a reading of the first verb in the Song at the Sea.

It is not written "Then Moses sang," (*shar*) but "Then Moses will sing, (*yashir*). Thus we find that we can derive resurrection from the dead from the Torah.<sup>32</sup>

Next comes an enumeration of ten songs referred to in the Bible. The first nine relate to past redemptive events. According to the midrash, the tenth song alludes to God's ultimate redemption of Israel which will bring the painful cycle of its history— from redemption to subjugation, back to redemption and subjugation— to a resounding and final redemptive climax.<sup>33</sup>

A few more examples are worth citing. On the verse "He is become my salvation" (Ex 15:2), the midrash declares, "He was my salvation in the past and He will be my salvation in the future."<sup>34</sup> On "The Lord is a Man of War" (Ex. 15:3), the midrash offers one of its most poignant arguments. "There may be a hero in a country, but the strength which he has at the age of forty is not like that which he has at sixty. Nor is the strength he has at sixty the same as at seventy, but as he goes on, his strength becomes diminished. He by whose word the world came into being, however, is not so, for "I, the Lord change not" (Mal. 3:6).<sup>35</sup>

If the Mekhilta's treatment of the Song at the Sea struggles to affirm God's capacity to return to the stage of history, the circumstances behind that struggle are not difficult to grasp. This is a tannaitic midrash: most of the sages it quotes lived during the first and second centuries CE, arguably one of the lowest points of Jewish history. Two failed revolts against Rome, one in 70 CE and the other in 132, brought about the destruction of the Temple, the death of hundreds of thousands of Jews, the plowing under of Jewish Jerusalem with the construction of Aelia Capitolina, a Roman city, in its place, the banishment of Jews from the Jerusalem and the exile of a significant portion of the population from the Land of Israel. Whereas the First Temple's destruction in 586 BCE was followed by relatively speedy rebuilding some seventy years later, hopes for a similarly rapid reconstruction of the Second Temple were stillborn. It makes perfect sense that a midrash compiled during an era when God's outstretched arm had seemingly vanished would be intent on proving that God was still God.<sup>36</sup>

Let us briefly return to the specific portion from the Mekhilta that I suspect inspired the Haggadah's "Pour out Your wrath."

*Teshalach charonkha*—You *sent* forth Your fury, is not written here, rather You *will* send forth your fury in the future to come. As it is written, "Pour out Your wrath upon them; may your blazing anger overtake them" (Psalms 69:25). And it is written, "Pour out Your wrath upon the nations . . ." Why? ". . . Because they have devoured Jacob, have devoured and consumed him, desolated his home" (Jeremiah 10:25).

In a context where we might well have expected the past tense, the midrash exploits the ambiguity of the imperfect tense in Hebrew which allows the verb to be read in the present or future tense. As Judah Goldin observes, "Verbs in the imperfect give the homilist his opportunity to suggest eschatological intentions."<sup>37</sup> The basis, however, for the midrash's choice of proof texts (Psalms 69:25 and Jeremiah 10:25) is not so clear. Both verses begin with an imperative, "Pour out," *shfokh*. We might have expected proof texts with verses that referred to the pouring out of divine wrath using the future tense.<sup>38</sup> Perhaps the midrash assumes that the imperative refers to an action yet to occur and exploits an implicit relationship between imperatives and the future tense.<sup>39</sup> But I think the historical context of the verses themselves offers a better sense of why they are indeed appropriate proof texts.

Both verses refer to the destruction of the First Temple and call upon God to punish the responsible nation. The Temple had been destroyed by the Babylonian empire under Nebuchadnezzar in 586 BCE. Nebuchadnezzar died in 561 BCE and scarcely two decades later the Babylonian empire fell to Cyrus the Great of Persia. Here then was a case in which the call for God's wrath met with a clear and swift divine response. Again Goldin's words are apt: "These comments are a good example of the Rabbis seeing "prophecy" in history, that is, events in the past are for them a foreshadowing also of the future."<sup>40</sup> Our midrash argues as follows. "Look at how God brought down Neuchadnezzar and restored the exiles from Babylon. If God intervened then, God can—and therefore will—do so again. The divine hand that redeemed Israel at the Sea has lost none of its strength."

It is now time to consider the Haggadah's rationale for adding Lamentations 3:66 to the material it used from the Mekhilta. The verse reads: "Pursue them from under the heavens of the Lord." Let us assume that this verse should share various attributes with those that precede it in this passage. If so, my hypothesis about the relationship between the Mekhilta and the Haggadah's "Pour out Your wrath . . ." would lead to three predictions: 1) That this verse should relate to the destruction of the First Temple; 2) that it should appear in the Mekhilta; and 3) that its midrashic context should speak to the issue of God's capacity for future action. These predictions constitute a test, as it were, of the hypothesis advanced so far.

It turns out that each of these predictions is correct. First, as with the preceding verses in the passage, this one too relates to the destruction of the First Temple and calls on God to wreak vengeance upon the guilty party. Second, this verse—which makes only several appearances in midrashic literature—does appear in the Mekhilta.<sup>41</sup> And third, its midrashic context is startlingly similar to the passage from the Mekhilta we have discussed heretofore. Here too the midrash revolves around the fact that the opening verb in this verse can be understood as referring to the future. Usually, *tirdof* is rendered ‘pursue,’ but according to the Mekhilta it should be read in the future, ‘he will pursue.’ The Mekhilta comments on God’s pledge to blot out the memory of Amalek from “under the heavens,” *mitachat hashamayim* (Ex. 18:14):

When will the name of these people be blotted out? At the time when idolatry will be eradicated together with its worshippers and God will be recognized throughout the world as the One, and His kingdom will be established for all eternity. For at that time, “shall the Lord go and fight,” (Zech. 14:3); “And the Lord shall be King,” (ibid. v. 9). And it also says, “You *will* pursue them in anger and destroy them [from under the heavens of the Lord, (Lamentations 3:66)].<sup>42</sup>

The similarity between the Mekhilta’s midrash featuring this verse from Lamentations and that of the other “Pour out Your wrath . . .” verses is striking indeed. Lamentations 3:66 thus passes the test with flying colors. And I believe the midrashic affinity between this particular verse and the earlier ones in our passage greatly strengthens the argument for a relationship between the Mekhilta and the Haggadah’s “Pour out Your wrath . . .”<sup>43</sup> Viewed in light of its midrashic substrate, the entire passage offers a resounding promise that God can and will return to the stage of history.

### Theological Questions Prompted by the Crusades

We cannot be sure if the Haggadah’s “Pour out Your wrath” came about as a direct response to the First Crusade or whether it developed somewhat before.<sup>44</sup> But we do know that after Mahzor Vitry (composed sometime before 1105) one or another version of the passage appears in Haggadot without fail. So if the Crusades did not inspire the passage, they likely created fertile ground for its rapid and universal acceptance. In either case, it is useful to take a brief look at Jewish reactions to the first two Crusades (1095-1099 and 1147-1149) because they make it clear that the age-old questions about God’s capacity to intervene in history surfaced with renewed urgency. *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Simson* (1140) reports that the Jews of the Rhineland “cried out with all their hearts, saying . . . Where are all your wonders which our forefathers related to us, saying: ‘Did You not bring us up from Egypt and from Babylonia and rescue us on numerous occasions?’”<sup>45</sup> When the chronicler relates the murder of eleven hundred people on a single day in Mainz, he asks, “Why did the heavens not darken and the stars not withhold their radiance . . .? . . . Will You restrain Yourself for these things, O Lord?” *Sefer Zekhirah* (?1174) calls for God to “reveal to us His vengeance against both Edom and Ishmael, as He did against Pharaoh and of Egypt. . . We cannot question the ways of Him Who is fearful and awesome. We must always declare His righteousness. It

is we who have sinned; what can we say? *May His strength be aroused* and His mercies awakened upon us, amen.”<sup>46</sup>

As a final example we must note a piyyut that uses a shocking word play, the original source of which is none other than the Mekhilta’s commentary on the Song at the Sea.<sup>47</sup> The piyyut was composed by Isaac bar Shalom in 1146 in the wake of the Second Crusade. Until the early decades of the twentieth century it appeared in the Ashkenazi Passover Machzor for recitation on the first Shabbat after Passover. It begins with a midrashic word play on Exodus 15:11—“Who is like You, O Lord, among the mighty. . .” With the addition of a single Hebrew consonant, the piyyut transforms God from mighty, ‘*elim*,’ to dumb, ‘*ilemim*,’ utterly incapable of speech even in the face of Israel’s suffering. The piyyut continues with a plea that God “arouse Your mighty power . . . [that] once smote the monster of the Nile.” Its haunting refrain comes from Psalms (83:2): “Do not keep silence.”

This small sample of responses to the Crusades illustrates the yearning for the return of an interventionist God to the stage of history. I believe that whoever assembled the verses in the Haggadah’s “Pour out Your wrath . . .” was not only familiar with our passage in the Mekhilta, but felt a special resonance with it, as if he were living through a dark period of violence and vulnerability akin to that from which the Mekhilta emerged. The historical details differed, but during both periods the sense of God’s absence offered a particularly painful contrast with God’s palpable presence in the biblical Exodus, the paradigm of Jewish hopes for redemption. To a scholar from France or the Rhineland in the bleak years of the Crusades, our passage in the Mekhilta must have offered a dose of comfort—at least insofar as it often helps to know that one’s forebears lived through comparable tragedy and wrestled with the same painful questions. Over the millennia, the answers remained broadly similar: God’s inaction could not be fully explained; but belief in God’s *capacity* to act remained intact. Indeed it became the role of liturgy to affirm that answer day in day out.

A medieval commentary on the Haggadah attributed to Rabbi Eliezer ben Judah of Worms (Rokeach, c. 1176-1238) refers to a custom that offers further support to this argument. He notes that before “Pour out Your wrath . . .” it was customary to recite the following verse from Psalms (17:7): “Display Your faithfulness in wondrous deeds, You who deliver with Your right hand those who seek refuge from assailants.” This introductory verse gives tangible expression to the connection between “Pour our Your wrath . . .” and the deep yearning to once more witness the mighty deeds of God’s redeeming hand.<sup>48</sup>

We ought not be surprised that the liturgy of the Haggadah expanded in response to such yearnings. It is worth remembering that the Song at the Sea—midrashically understood as describing God’s ultimate victory in messianic times—had not been part of the daily *P’sukei d’Zimra* until the Middle Ages.<sup>49</sup> We can’t be sure just why the Song at the Sea found its way into the daily liturgy. The Zohar (thirteenth century) suggests that it is the most important hymn and that reciting it with proper devotion plays a key role in stirring God’s capacity to carry out acts of redemption.<sup>50</sup> A comment in Mahzor Lev Shalem, the

Conservative Movement's new mahzor, bears consideration. "The experience of the long exile may have created the need for the memory of triumph. The Midrash associated this Song with the final redemption."<sup>51</sup> As the Song of the Sea ultimately became part of the daily liturgy, so "Pour out Your wrath," part of the Mekhilta's midrash on the Song at the Sea, eventually entered the Haggadah.

### Placement in the Haggadah

Before concluding, we must consider the matter of this passage's placement in the Haggadah, an issue, as we have seen, that has long occupied commentators. The key to solving the problem lies in two areas. First we must understand the significance of this particular juncture of the Haggadah. Second, we must remember the midrashic context of our Mekhilta passage. As to the first, recall that our passage precedes the second part of the Hallel, Psalms 115-118. (We recite the first part of Hallel, Psalms 113 and 114 just before blessing the second cup of wine, before the meal.) The Talmud discusses (Pesachim 118a) why we recite the standard Hallel since we also recite the Great Hallel, i.e. Psalm 136. According to the Talmud, we do so because the Hallel refers to these five things:<sup>52</sup> the Exodus; the splitting of the Red Sea; the giving of Torah; the resurrection of the dead; and the travails of the Messiah. The Talmud then brings the verses from the appropriate psalms to prove its point. Without repeating the entire *sugya*, suffice it to say that allusions to the first three events, all of which occur in the past, appear in Psalms 114:1, 3 and 4. The Talmud finds allusions to resurrection of the dead the travails of the Messiah—events in the future—in Psalms 116:9 and 115:1. This seems to have given rise to the more general assertion propounded by Eleazar ben Judah of Worms (c.1176-1238) that the first two psalms of Hallel refer to the redemption from Egypt and the last four to the future war of Gog and Magog.<sup>53</sup> The view was spread by Meir ben Baruch of Rothenberg (c. 1215-1293) and Jacob ben Moses Moellin (c. 1360-1427).<sup>54</sup> (As noted the Maharal of Prague noted expresses a similar opinion.)

"Pour out Your wrath" comes just at the moment when the Seder's focus on redemption shifts from past to future, from Egypt to the days of the Messiah. The midrashic origins of this passage supply the perfect resonance. As we have seen, the Haggadah's "Pour out Your wrath" reaches back to a passage in the Mekhilta which also looks both backward and forward as it wonders about God's redemptive power—in Egypt versus the future to come. The Mekhilta concludes that just as God acted back then, God's redemptive capacity remains alive and well. To prove the point, it brings verses that call on God to avenge those who destroyed the First Temple. Because the call seems to have met with a favorable divine response—the demise of Nebuchadnezzar and his empire—the midrash "proves" that God's power to act remains in tact. As the Haggadah turns from the Exodus to the coming of Messiah, this is precisely the reassurance we need.

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Understanding the background of Mekhilta's "Pour out Your wrath" midrash illuminates the theological issues that may have drawn the midrash into the Haggadah. It's primary function was to "prove" the potential for divine action subsequent to the Exodus.

Secondarily, in light of its connection with the destruction of the First Temple and the rapidly ensuing downfall of the Babylonian empire, the passage offers tangible support for the efficacy of calling on God to avenge Israel's enemies.<sup>55</sup> The passage's midrashic roots also clarify the location of "Pour out Your wrath" in the Haggadah, at the very transition between the remembrance of God's saving hand in Egypt and the yearning for its reappearance, this time to help bring the ultimate messianic redemption—*bimheirah b'yameinu*, speedily, in our time.

Finally, let me add that this analysis should not be read as an argument for or against retaining "Pour out Your wrath" in our Haggadot. Nor is it my intent to sugar coat "Pour out Your wrath," to make a difficult passage more palatable. For those who continue to recite it, I believe it is important to understand that the passage is not simply about cursing our enemies, but grows out of profound questions that have gnawed at Jewish consciousness over the centuries. Did the Exodus somehow deplete God's redemptive power? If not, how do we explain the apparent difference between God's forceful interventions on Israel's behalf then and God's comparative remoteness throughout so much of subsequent Jewish history? These questions remain as vexing today as they were in the second or third centuries when the Mekhilta was compiled and in the era of the Crusades when the Mekhilta's midrash found its way into the Haggadah. If "Pour out Your wrath" can help dig into those questions at your Seder, *dayyenu*, it would suffice!

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<sup>1</sup> Many thanks to Rabbis Burton L. Visotzky and Noah Arnow for their helpful comments on a draft of this article.

<sup>2</sup> The Sephardic and Yemenite rites include only Psalms 79:6-7. See E. D. Goldschmidt, *The Passover Haggadah: Its Sources and History* (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1960), p. 130.

<sup>3</sup> Given the enormous scholarship on the Haggadah one can reasonably ask why no one has previously suggested a source or inspiration for this passage. For more on this see note 15.\*

<sup>4</sup> Evidence for the troublesome nature of this passage began as early as Eliezer ben Elijah Ashkenazi (Egypt, Italy and Poland, 1513-1585). His commentary notes that "some of the Gentiles among whom we are exiled under their protection have thought that we are cursing them." He goes on to limit the malediction to nations that know neither God nor of the Exodus. The curse cannot therefore apply to Christians and Muslims. See Eliezer ben Elijah Ashkenazi, *Maase Hashem* (Warsaw, 1871), part 2, p. 37. Ashkenazi's view is all the more important because it was repeated in a commentary on the *Shulchan Arukh* (sixteenth century) perhaps Judaism's most influential law code. That commentary, *Be'er Hagolah*, was written by Moshe Rivkes (d. c 1671/72) and appears in all printed versions of the *Shulchan Arukh* (*Choshen Mishpat*, 425:5). See Neta Ecker Rosinger *Universalism in the Thought of Rabbi Eleazer Ashkenazi*, Doctoral Dissertation, Haifa University, 2010, p. 259. In modern times alternatives to the passage have been presented since the middle of the nineteenth century. See David Golinkin, "Pesah Potpourri: On the Origin and Development of some Lesser-Known Pesah Customs," *Conservative Judaism*, 55 (3), 2003. Indeed, the Reform Movement's Haggadah eliminated it in 1907. Mordecai Kaplan did the same in 1945. The Conservative Movement also considered removing it. According to Rabbi Jules Harlow, a member of the editorial committee of *The Feast of Freedom*, the Conservative Movement's first Haggadah (1982), the passage proved controversial and a number of the committee's members wanted to

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exclude it. See Debra Reed Blank, “*Sh’fokh Hamatkha* and Eliyahu in the Haggadah: Ideology and Liturgy,” *Conservative Judaism*, 40 (2), 1987/1988, p. 85, note 42.

<sup>5</sup> Shmuel and Ze’ev Safrai, *Haggadah of the Sages* (Jerusalem: Carta, 2009), English translation, pp. 153-154.

<sup>6</sup> Not all the commentators we will consider had before them precisely the same version of the passage as I quoted above. Some may have had just the first two verses as is the Sephardic custom. In this case, that difference is not critical.

<sup>7</sup> According to the Jerusalem Talmud the four cups also symbolize God’s fourfold promise of redemption (Exodus. 6:6-7), the four cups of wine referred to in the story of Joseph and Pharaoh (Genesis 40:11, 13, 14), the four kingdoms that oppressed Israel, and four biblical references to cups of consolation that Israel will drink (Psalms 16:5, 23:5 and 116:13, *kos yishuot*, counts as two).

<sup>8</sup> Quoted in *Haggadah Shelemah* by Menachem Kasher (Jerusalem, Torah Shelemah Institute: 1967), p. 179.

<sup>9</sup> Isaac Abarbanel, *Haggadah Shel Pesach: Zevach Pesach* (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 2007), p. 258.

<sup>10</sup> Goldschmidt, op. cit. p. 62-63.

<sup>11</sup> Safrai and Safrai, op. cit. p. 152.

<sup>12</sup> This verse from Psalm 79 might have been a good choice for another reason as well. At roughly the same time as “Pour out Your wrath” entered the Haggadah, Psalm 79:11 found its way into *Av Harachamim*, a memorial prayer introduced into the Ashkenazi liturgy following the Crusades. The prayer precedes *Ashrei* and customs vary as to when it is recited.

<sup>13</sup> The printed version of the Mahzor Vitry that is based on the British Museum manuscript includes these verses : Ps. 79:6-7; 69:25-26; 35:5-6; 28:4; 5:11; Hosea 9:14; Lam. 3:66 (*Machsor Vitry*, S. Hurwitz, Nuremburg: Bulka, 1923), p. 296. The Reggio manuscript owned by the Jewish Theological Seminary includes a different selection: Ps. 79:6; 69:25; 24, 26, 28, 29; 2:9; 69:23; Hosea 9:14; Lam. 3:64, 66, 65; 79:7. Thanks to Dr. Jay Rovner, Manuscript Bibliographer at the JTS Library for reviewing this manuscript for me. A London manuscript dated 1287 includes: Ps. 79:6; 69:25, 28; Lam. 3:64-66; Ps. 69:24; 29; 2:9; Hosea 9:14; Jer. 10:25 (“The Ritual of the Seder and the Agada of the English Jews before the Expulsion” by David Kaufman, *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, 1892, vol. 4, pp. 557-8.)

<sup>14</sup> Safrai and Safrai, op. cit. p. 151.

<sup>15</sup> See the following: E. D. Goldschmidt, op. cit. pp. 62-64; Shmuel and Ze’ev Safrai, op. cit., pp. 151-153; Lawrence Hoffman and David Arnov, *My People’s Passover Haggadah* (Woodstock, Vermont: Jewish Lights, 2008), vol. 2, pp. 147-148, 149-151; Joseph Tabory, *JPS Commentary on the Passover Haggadah* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 2008), pp. 53-56. As to why previous researchers on the Haggadah have not explored the relationship between the Mekhilta and the Haggadah’s “Pour out your wrath,” I can suggest the following. Recent scholarship on the Haggadah’s sources generally repeats the findings of previous generations’ great scholars. I came across the passage in the Mekhilta when reading the midrash as a source for midrashic insights on the Exodus. Rather than searching for the origins of “Pour out Your wrath,” I simply bumped into this particular passage in the Mekhilta. It should also be noted that according to the critical edition of the Mekhilta by Horvitz and Rabin (see below) this particular passage is present in all manuscripts of the Mekhilta.

<sup>16</sup> Israel Jacob Yuval, *Two Nations in Your Womb: Perceptions of Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), chapter 3. Yuval contrasts the Ashkenazic concept of “vengeful redemption” with that of the “proselytizing redemption” which he argues was more prevalent in Sephardic communities. Yuval explores our passage in the broader medieval liturgical context of directing curses against gentiles.

<sup>17</sup> The passage can be found in *Mekhilta d’Rabbi Ishmael*, H.S. Horvitz and I. A. Rabin, editors (Jerusalem: Shalem Hafatztah Seform, 1998), p. 136, line 17, Beshalach/ Va’y;hi 6, and *Mekhilta de-Rabbi Ishmael*, Jacob Z. Lauterbach translator and editor (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1949), vol. 2, p. 48, tractate Shirata, 6:69. For Lauterbach the citation includes volume, page, tractate and line number within the tractate. For Horvitz and Rabin the citation includes page and line number, tractate, parashah and chapter number (as per the Mekhilta’s arrangement). Parallel forms of the midrash appear in Mekhilta of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai, 15:7 and in Yalkut Shimoni, 247.

<sup>18</sup> Lamentations Rabbah 2:8 provides another important midrashic source that brings together various verses on the theme of pouring out divine wrath. It cites four “pourings” for good and four for evil. The

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“evil pourings” are found in Isaiah 42:25, Ezekiel 9:8, and Lamentations 4:11 and 2:4. It is noteworthy that these four verses all refer to divine wrath targeting Israel.

<sup>19</sup> The Sifre on Deuteronomy (piska 301) or Midrash Tannaim, a reconstruction of a reputedly lost Mekhilta on Deuteronomy by Zvi David Hoffman (source) were thought to be the sources of the Haggadah’s lengthy “Wandering Aramean Midrash.” Research by Jay Rovner demonstrates that although this midrash may have been built upon a short passage in the Sifre on Deuteronomy, it continued to develop through the Geonic period. See Jay Rovner, “Two Early Witnesses to the Formation of the *Miqra Bikkurim* Midrash and Their Implications for the Evolution of the Haggadah Text,” *Hebrew Union College Annual*, vol. 75, 2004.

<sup>20</sup> Lauterbach, *Pischa* 18:119, vol. 1, p. 166. Horvitz and Rabin p. 73:7, *Pischa/Bo*, 18.

<sup>21</sup> Lauterbach, *Pischa* 17:96, vol. 1, p. 149. Horvitz and Rabin p. 66:8, *Pischa/Bo*, 17.

<sup>22</sup> Lauterbach, *Pischa* 16:96, vol.1, p. 135. Horvitz and Rabin p.60:7, *Pischa/Bo*, 16. Here the Mekhilta actually provides a somewhat briefer parallel to that which appears in the Sifre on Deuteronomy (piska 130) and the Mishnah, *Berachot* 1:4.

<sup>23</sup> It may also contain some of the language that found its way into *Dayenu*. See Lauterbach, *Beshalach* 2:108-109, vol. 1, p. 195, Horvitz and Rabin p. 86:14, *Beshalach* 1, and *Shirata* 7:21, vol. 2, p. 55, Horvitz and Rabin p. 139:17, *Beshalach/Shira* 7, as well as commentary by David Arnow in *My People’s Passover Haggadah*, edited by Lawrence A. Hoffman and David Arnow (Woodstock, Vermont: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2008), vol. 2 p. 49 (see commentary on “Brought judgment upon them,” and “Given us their wealth”).

<sup>24</sup> Lauterbach, *Beshalach*, 7:110, vol. 1, p. 251, Horvitz and Rabin p. 114:1, *Beshalach/Va’y’hi*.

<sup>25</sup> Saadia (892-942) includes this entire section as an acceptable addition. *Siddur R. Saadia Gaon*, edited by I. Davidson, S. Assaf, and B. I. Joel (Rubin Mass Ltd.: Jerusalem, 2000), p. 143. The passage also appears in the earlier siddur of Amram Gaon (d. 875), but this may be a later addition.

<sup>26</sup> Lauterbach, *Pischa* 5:6, vol.1, pp. 33-34, Horvitz and Rabin p. 14:13, *Pischa/Bo*, 5.

<sup>27</sup> These commentaries are contained in *Haggadah Shel Pesach Torat Chayim*, Mordecai Katsnellenbogen editor, (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1998), pp. 174-175.

<sup>28</sup> See Joshua Kulp, *The Schechter Haggadah* (Jerusalem: The Schechter Institute of Jewish Studies, 2009), p. 210.

<sup>29</sup> See Lauterbach, *Pischa* 18:119, vol. 1, p. 166, Horvitz and Rabin p. 73:12, *Pischa/Bo* 18.

<sup>30</sup> Early versions of the passage included additional verses to these four. For example, see Goldschmidt op. cit. pp. 63-64.

<sup>31</sup> Although my explanation for why the verses were reversed may well be correct, another factor may have been in play as well. In the midrash we find the explanation for God’s wrath only at the end of the verses it quotes. In the Haggadah, that explanation comes in the middle of the passage. Thus the rhythm of the midrash begins with two pleas that God pour out His wrath (A) and follows that with a rhetorical “Why” and the answer—that the nations have destroyed Jacob (B). Schematically, the midrash orders its themes like this: A, A, B. The midrash was interested in making a point (as we will soon see.) It wasn’t interested in composing a piece of liturgy. The Haggadah wanted to make the same point as the midrash, but it in a liturgical context. Thus, the Haggadah creates the following order: A plea that God pour out His wrath (A), because the nations have destroyed Jacob (B) followed by another plea that God pour out His wrath. The Haggadah’s order, A, B, A, seems more powerful both because it supplies a rationale for God’s wrath earlier in the passage, and because it’s A- B-A (the classic sonata form as well as a common poetic rhyme scheme) structure is rhetorically more compelling as it recapitulates the plea for divine intervention.

<sup>32</sup> Lauterbach, vol. 2. p. 1, *Shirata* 1:1, Horvitz and Rabin, p.116:1 *Beshalach/Shira*, 1.

<sup>33</sup> Lauterbach, vol. 2, pp. 2-7, *Shirata* 1:15-81, Horvitz and Rabin, p. 116:9-118:13, *Beshalach/Shira*, 1.

<sup>34</sup> Lauterbach, vol. 2, p. 24, *Shirata*, 3:25, Horvitz and Rabin, p. 126:18, *Beshalach/Shira* 3.

<sup>35</sup> Lauterbach, vol. 2, p. 32, *Shirata*, 4:31, Horvitz and Rabin, p. 130:6, *Beshalach/Shira* 4. Judah Goldin likewise comments on the frequency of this motif. See his *The Song at the Sea* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), notes on pp. 150, 161, and 205.

<sup>36</sup>For a review of the historical context within which the Mekhilta was compiled, see Elaine A. Phillips, *Mekhilta D’Rabbi Ishmael: A Study in Composition and Context* (Doctoral Dissertation, Annenberg Research Institute, Philadelphia PA, March, 1991), pp. 691-707. Phillips demonstrates that “a main objective of the midrash is to bring the biblical text into the present. That God is consistent in His being and action is vital . . . . He is the same from one biblical context to the next, from the past to the future and from

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this world to the world to come” (p. 310). She begins her treatment of the text’s historical context with an observation that, “The exhortations throughout seem to indicate a population tending toward disinterest in traditions” (p. 691).

<sup>37</sup> Goldin, *op. cit.* p. 205.

<sup>38</sup> Indeed the midrashic passage that immediately follows does exactly this with this biblical passage: “. . . it consumes them like straw (Ex.15:7). The midrash takes a verb form usually read in the present tense, *yochleimu*, ‘consumes,’ reads it as future and then brings two proof texts each of which uses the future tense to demonstrate that God *will* consume Israel’s enemies like straw.

<sup>39</sup> Thanks to Joel Hoffman for explaining the relationship between imperatives and the future tense.

<sup>40</sup> Goldin, *op. cit.* p. 161. Goldin refers to the passage in the Mekhilta which immediately precedes ours and which also reads the imperfect as future.

<sup>41</sup> In a search of the classical midrashim in the Bar Ilan Responsa Project (version 17+), the verse appears only in Lamentations Rabbah 3:10 and the Midrash on Psalms 121:3, in addition to the Mekhilta.

<sup>42</sup> Lauterbach, vol. 2, pp. 158-159, Amalek, 2:155-161, Horvitz and Rabin, p. 186:7 Beshalch/Amalek, 2.

<sup>43</sup> As noted earlier, a number of medieval Haggadot included many more biblical imprecations than those which now appear in the standard Ashkenazi Haggadah. No one would assert a dearth of such biblical verses! It is nonetheless interesting that if we consider the eighteen additional verses that augment “Pour out Your wrath . . .” in various ensembles in different Haggadot, we find that none of the additions are used by the Mekhilta. Put differently, one of the criteria for inclusion in the Ashkenazic text as we know it today may have been that the verse have a midrashic “pedigree” traceable to the Mekhilta.

<sup>44</sup> It makes its first documented appearance in the Mahzor Vitry which was completed by one of Rashi’s students before Rashi died 1105.

<sup>45</sup> Shlomo Eidelberg, *The Jews and the Crusaders: The Hebrew Chronicles of the First and Second Crusades* (Hoboken, NJ: Ktav Publishing House, 1996), p. 24. An almost identical plea appears in the Narrative of the Old Persecutions (Mainz Anonymous), p. 105.

<sup>46</sup> Eidelberg, *op. cit.* pp. 132-133. Italics added. As Eidelberg notes, the phrase “May His strength be aroused” (Numbers 14:17) appears in BT Sanhedrin 111b as the conclusion to a lengthy passage in which Moses questions God’s actions.

<sup>47</sup> Lauterbach, Shirata 8:19-25, vol. 2, p. 60-61, Horvitz and Rabin, p. 142:10 Beshalach/Shira, 8. For the piyyut see Jakob Josef Petuchowski, *Theology and Poetry: Studies in the Medieval Piyyut* (London: Routledge, 1978), ch. 7, p. 71, ff. For a parallel source see BT Gittin 56b. It is odd that Petuchowski, who ascribes the piyyut’s word play to the Gittin 56b, did not look further. There the Talmud ascribes the words to Rabbi Ishmael, traditionally thought to be the author of the Mekhilta. That attribution does not occur where the passage occurs in the Mekhilta itself.

<sup>48</sup> Rabbi Eliezer explains this introduction by noting that “we don’t begin with ‘Pour out;’ we don’t begin with retribution.” The commentary is cited in Safrai and Safrai (p. 174) and Tabory (p. 54). Thanks to Joseph Tabory for supplying the following source which contains the commentary: “Haggadah shel Pesah ve Shir hashirim im perush ha Rokeach, by Moshe Hershler, (Jerusalem: Mekhon Shalem, 1984), p. 135.

<sup>49</sup> A. I. Schechter (*Studies in Jewish Liturgy*, Philadelphia: Dropsie College, 1930), pp. 52-55, cites evidence that the custom of this daily recitation began in Palestine and spread to Germany by the early ninth century. It does not appear in the Siddur of Rav Amram Gaon but Saadia includes it as an acceptable addition. *Siddur R. Saadia Gaon*, edited by I. Davidson, S. Assaf, and B. I. Joel (Rubin Mass Ltd.: Jerusalem, 2000), p. 312. See also Ismar Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1993), p. 75.

<sup>50</sup> Soncino Zohar, Exodus, 2:131b-132a.

<sup>51</sup> *Mahzor Lev Shalem for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur* (New York: The Rabbinical Assembly, 2010), p. 65.

<sup>52</sup> Rashbam says they are all related to redemption.

<sup>53</sup> *Rabbi Eleazar of Worms: Drasha L’Pesach*, edited by Simcha Emanuel (Jerusalem: Mikize Nirdamim, 2006), p. 2006.

<sup>54</sup> See *Sefer Minhagim* of the school of Rabbi Meir ben Baruch of Rothenburg edited by Israel Elfenbein (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1938), p. 25; *Sefer Maharil: Minhagim* (Jacob Moellin), edited by Shlomo Shpietzer (Jerusalem: Mekhon Yerushalayim, 1989), p. 108, siman 29.

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<sup>55</sup> For more on the Ashkenazi practice of “cursing” Gentiles during the Middle Ages, see Israel Jacob Yuval, *Two Nations in Your Womb: Perceptions of Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), chapter 3.