YESHIVAT HAR ETZION

ISRAEL KOSCHITZKY VIRTUAL BEIT MIDRASH (VBM)

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**Before Sinai: Jewish Values and Jewish Law**

**By Rav Dr. Judah Goldberg**

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**Shiur #20: The Land of Israel (3): The Land of Israel and the Exodus**

The [previous *shiur*](http://vbm-torah.org/archive/sinai/19sinai.htm) ended with an incredible claim by the Talmud (*Bava Batra* 117a): The generation of the Exodus acquired the Land of Israel in concrete, halakhic terms, even before they left Egypt and even though they personally never made their way to the Holy Land. While this reinforces the Rambam’s deliberate emphasis upon the “immigrants from Egypt” in defining the Land of Israel for us, it also leaves us wondering about the relationship between liberation from bondage and inheritance of the Land. This *shiur* will further explore the connection between the two, upon the backdrop of *berit Avot*.

**The Exodus and** ***Berit Bein Ha-betarim***

The Exodus, as commemorated on Pesach and remembered year-round, most obviously marks our transition from an enslaved tribe to a free and independent nation, ready to stand before God at Sinai and enter into His covenant. This journey, of course, was specifically anticipated by *berit Avot*, and therefore *berit bein ha-betarim* (“covenant between the halves”) occupies a prominent place in our Haggadic text:

Blessed is He Who keeps His promise to Israel, Blessed be He; for the Holy One, blessed be He, calculated the end, to do as he said to our father Avraham at the *berit* *bein ha-betarim*, as it says: “He said to Avram, ‘Surely know that your progeny will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and they will serve them, and they will oppress them for four hundred years.  But the nation that they will serve, I shall judge, and afterwards they will leave with great property’” (*Bereishit* 15:13-14).[[1]](#footnote-1)

One who recites the Haggada without knowledge of the Torah text might assume that this concludes God’s promise. However, perusal of *Bereishit* 15 reveals that *berit bein ha-betarim* is not, first and foremost, about slavery and redemption, but about the Land of Israel! In the context of the Torah’s narrative, God’s covenant answers a specific question posed by Avraham: “Through what will I know that I will inherit [the Land]?” (15:8). Furthermore, in *berit bein ha-betarim*, redemption from servitude is only a segue to eventual inheritance of the Land: “And the fourth generation will return **here**” (*Bereishit* 15:16). As the Torah subsequently summarizes, “On that day God forged a *berit* with Avraham, saying, ‘To your progeny have I given this land’” (15:18).

Similarly, the Land of Israel consistently appears in *Sefer Shemot* as the final destination for the Exodus. As God tells Moshe in his initial communication with him, “I have descended to save [my nation] from the hand of Egypt and to take it up from that land to a good and wide land, to a land flowing with milk and honey” (3:8).[[2]](#footnote-2) God foresees inheritance and settlement of the Land of Israel not as an epilogue to the Exodus, but as an integral part of the Exodus itself. The process of redemption that begins in Egypt will conclude not on the far banks of the Red Sea or at the foot of Mt. Sinai, but only in the land of our forefathers.

This expanded perspective on the anticipated Exodus appears in greater detail at the beginning of *Parashat Vaera*. Famously, God outlines at least four steps to redemption, epitomized by the opening verb of each step—“And I will take you out… and I will rescue you… and I will redeem you… and I will take you for myself as a nation” (6:6-7). The *Talmud Yerushalmi* (*Pesachim* 10:1) quotes an opinion that the four cups of wine that one must drink at the *seder* are based on this quartet of terms.

However, reading these verses in context leads us to a fifth “term” of redemption: “And I shall bring you to the land that I raised My hand to give it to Avraham, to Yitzchak and to Yaakov, and I have given itto you as an inheritance, I am God” (6:8). Read against the backdrop of *berit bein ha-betarim,* as well as of God’s earlier description of the imminent Exodus, this verse naturally represents the culmination of the redemptive process. In fact, only through this step will God fulfill his promise to our forefathers—*berit Avot—*with which *Parashat Vaera* actually opens: “I appeared (*vaera*) to Avraham and to Yitzchak and to Yaakov… and I also established my covenant with them to give them the Land of Canaan, the Land of their dwelling in which they lived” (6:3-4).

The Talmud, as we saw in the [previous *shiur*](http://vbm-torah.org/archive/sinai/19sinai.htm), assigns even greater significance to this fifth verse of redemption: “‘I have given itto you as an inheritance, I am God’ (*Shemot* 6:8)—‘It is an inheritance for you from your forefathers’; and to those who departed from Egypt was [the Torah] speaking” (*Bava Batra* 117b). In *Chazal*’s reading, this verse does not predict a future inheritance; rather, through this verse God actually bequeaths the Land of Israel to the Jews of that time. The pronouncements of Heaven are equivalent to actual transfers of property.[[3]](#footnote-3) Inasmuch as God is announcing that His pledge to the *Avot* has come due, the Land that for so long He has promised to their progeny is now, by Divine decree, in their hands.

In other words, inheritance of the Land of Israel is both the point of departure and the final destination for the Exodus, fused in a single verse. While redemption will ultimately culminate in the Land of Israel, its legal transfer to the Jews of Egypt marks the first step in this process, even while they are still buckling under Egyptian rule. Between these two endpoints will unfold the Jewish people’s full emergence into nationhood, first, through emancipation from Egypt and their resulting independence, and second, through assumption of a spiritual mandate and destiny at Mt. Sinai.

Finally, this narrative repeats itself one last time towards the end of the Torah, this time told in retrospect. One who offers first fruits in the Temple must recount the full trajectory of Jewish history, starting with our forefathers and their descent into slavery: “And you shall pronounce and say before Hashem your God, ‘A poor Aramean was my father.[[4]](#footnote-4) He descended to Egypt etc.’” (*Devarim* 21:5). After the bearer of first fruits describes our delivery from Egyptian bondage, he continues, “[God] brought us to this place, and He gave us this land etc.” (21:9). Here we have the entirety of Jewish destiny—that is, the story of *berit Avot*—so perfectly condensed into a handful of verses that the Sages specifically chose this text (known by its opening, “*Arami oveid avi*”) as the vehicle through which to recount the Exodus on the *seder* night (*Pesachim* 116a).[[5]](#footnote-5) Notably, where does this narrative end? In the “land flowing with milk and honey” (21:9).

**The Land and the People**

Highlighting the place of the Land of Israel within the Exodus does not mitigate the themes of Jewish national identity and purpose that the Exodus more commonly brings to mind; rather, it complements them. From the viewpoint of God’s original covenant with the *Avot*, **the people and the land are inextricable**. Emergence into peoplehood and inheritance of the Land are not two competing themes within the Torah’s narratives, but a single, unified vision for Avraham’s progeny—a strong and independent nation that both inhabits and draws its identity from the Land of Israel.

In fact, while *berit bein ha-betarim* seems most narrowly to answer Avraham’s question to God about inheritance of the Land, as noted above, this conversation follows an earlier one about children. Avraham laments, “Behold, to me you have not given any progeny,” and God reassures him that his own offspring will be as innumerable as the stars (*Bereishit* 15:3-5). As some commentators note, *Bereishit* 15 contains two distinct Divine promises: one about children, and one about the Land of Israel.[[6]](#footnote-6)

*Berit bein ha-betarim*, then, is perhaps a single covenant that encapsulates both pledges. For some inscrutable reason, God insists that hundreds of years of Egyptian bondage precede the launch date of Jewish national destiny. But when the moment of redemption arrives, its ambitious agenda is to create a people within a land, thus delivering on both promises simultaneously. Returning to the Torah’s summary statement about *berit bein ha-betarim*—“On that day God forged a *berit* with Avraham, saying, ‘To your **progeny** have I given this **land**’” (*Bereishit* 15:18)—now “progeny” and “land” each stand out as separate, though linked, elements.

**What Went Wrong?**

Admittedly, this interpretation of *berit Avot* and its fulfillment through the Exodus must grapple with an alternate picture given by our celebration on Pesach. Our annual commemoration truncates each of the central texts discussed above, whether in leaving out the final verses of both *berit bein ha-betarim* (*Bereishit* 15:15-16) and the recitation over first fruits (*Devarim* 26:9) or in recognizing only four terms of redemption, symbolized through cups of wine, rather than five. We seem to consistently ignore the Torah’s anticipated final step for the redemption at every turn. If *Torah She-bikhtav*, according to our reading, identifies inheritance of the Land of Israel as an integral stage of the redemption from Egypt, why does *Torah She-ba’al peh*—whether through the rabbinic commandment to drink only four cups or through the traditional text of the Haggada—deliberately exclude it?

One possible suggestion is that our *seder* is a product of history. Even if a Jew during the first Temple saw settlement of the Land of Israel as a natural progression of the redemptive process that started in Egypt, subsequent exiles made this association more difficult. Perhaps even during the second Temple period (when the *seder* as we know it was likely organized), acute awareness of the Second Commonwealth’s limitations led our Sages to focus upon the uncontaminated delivery from Egypt itself, rather than upon their incomplete hold on the Land of Israel.

Based on an insight of the Maharal, however, I suggest that these historical circumstances themselves reflect a more fundamental issue. The Maharal writes that had the redemption from Egypt unfolded as initially envisioned, with inheritance of the Land of Israel as an integral component, **then exile from the Land of Israel would never have been possible!** Just as our liberation from slavery and our sanctification through the Revelation at Sinai are irreversible, so would our arrival into the Land of Israel have been an exceptional, metahistoric moment that could never have been undone (*Netzach Yisrael* ch. 8).

Then what went wrong? According to the Maharal, this is the true tragedy of the “sin of the spies,” who convinced the Jews of the desert to reject the Land of Israel, and by extension, the legacy of their forefathers.[[7]](#footnote-7) As the Torah describes, God condemned that generation to slowly perish in the desert over the course of forty years, leaving the Land of Israel to their children. The severity of this punishment lies not in the decades-long delay, according to the Maharal, but in the fact that “then the departure from Egypt was split from the entrance into the Land, and they were not a single act.” The deaths of those who had walked out of Egypt did not amount merely to a delay in Jewish history, but to the premature end of the redemptive process. We tragically settled for only four out of five of the stages of redemption, with our eventual arrival in the Land of Israel downgraded to a “normal” historical event that could just as easily be reversed.[[8]](#footnote-8)

This is why, explains the Maharal, the consequence of the sin of the spies is eventual exile, as recorded in both *Torah She-bikhtav* and *Torah She-ba’al peh*. On the one hand, the Talmud famously deduces that the sin of the spies occurred on the ninth day of Av and anticipated the future tragedies that would occur on the same day:

“The nation cried on that night” (*Bamidbar* 14:1). Rabba said in the name of Rabbi Yochanan, “That night was the night of the ninth of Av. The Holy One, blessed be He, said to them: ‘You cried [on this night] a lament for no reason, and I will establish a lament for generations.’” (*Ta’anit* 29a)[[9]](#footnote-9)

However, parallel aggadic texts add that these long-term consequences of the sin of the spies are already explicit in *Tanakh*:

… and from that moment was it decreed that the Temple would be destroyed and that the Jewish people would be exiled among the nations, for it says, “He raised His hand [in oath] to them to strike [*lehapil*] them down in the desert; and to cast [*lehapil*] their progeny among the nations, and to scatter them across lands” (*Tehillim* 106:26-27).[[10]](#footnote-10) (*Midrash Tanchuma Shelach* 12; *Bamidbar Rabba* 16:20)

The Maharal’s interpretation helps us understand the link between the events of the desert and exile from the Land hundreds of years later. Specifically because the sin of the spies interrupted the redemptive process and weakened our eventual inheritance of the Land, future exiles became inevitable.

Furthermore, the sin of the spies drove a wedge between the Jewish people and their land. While the two were intended by *berit Avot* to be forever linked, the Jews of the desert spurned that vision, believing that Jewish destiny can be pursued elsewhere. In one sense, God’s punishment merely endorsed what His people had defiantly suggested. Jewish peoplehood will always be centered upon the Land of Israel and draw sustenance from it, but now peoplehood can be separated from it and indeed will be for large blocks of history.

**The Ambivalence of the *Seder***

To summarize, the fulfillment of *berit Avot* through the Exodus and its aftermath was derailed by the sin of the spies, thus cutting off settlement of the Land of Israel from the rest of the redemptive process and setting the stage for future exiles. So far, we have built this argument out of sources in *Tanakh* and *aggada*. In keeping with the general methodology of this series, can we ground this line of thinking in concrete halakhic expressions?

***Eggs***

At the end of the laws of the *seder* meal, R. Moshe Isserles (Rama) writes: “In some places they customarily eat eggs at the [*seder*] meal, as a symbol of mourning; and it seems to me that the reason is because the night of the ninth of Av was set [to fall on the same day of the week as] the night of Pesach” (*Orach Chayyim* 476:2).[[11]](#footnote-11) The Rama is referring to a curious feature of our calendar, by which the ninth of Av always falls on the same night of the week (e.g., Monday night or Wednesday night) as the first night of the preceding Pesach. The *midrash* asserts that this is no mere coincidence but rather an expression of a thematic link:

Rabbi Avin opened: “‘He filled me with bitterness [*merorim*]’—on the first night of Pesach; ‘He saturated me with wormwood’ (*Eikha* 3:15)—on the ninth of Av. From that which He filled me on the first night of Pesach, He saturated me on the night of the ninth of Av with wormwood. That is, the nights of the first day of Pesach are [the same as] the nights of the ninth of Av.” (*Eikha Rabbati*, Introduction, 18)[[12]](#footnote-12)

The link the *midrash* suggests is curious enough, but our desire to incorporate it into the *seder* rituals and thereby mix a tinge of mourning into our Yom Tov celebration is all the more bewildering. However, if we recognize that the sin of the spies on the ninth of Av did not merely delay our arrival in the Land of Israel but changed the trajectory of the Exodus itself, then the intimate link between Pesach and the ninth of Av becomes evident. Even as we celebrate redemption, we acknowledge the gap between the Exodus as it was and the Exodus as it was supposed to be.

***A Fifth Cup?***

Perhaps a stronger halakhic expression of the link between the Exodus and inheritance of the Land of Israel can be found with regard to the cups of wine that one drinks at the *seder*. We took for granted earlier that one only drinks four cups, but this number is actually a subject of halakhic debate. The *mishnayot* of *Pesachim* speak of only four cups, and a *beraita* cited by the *Gemara*, according to Rashi’s text, echoes that notion: “The Rabbis taught: [On] the fourth [cup], one recites *hallel*, and one says ‘the Great *Hallel*’; these are the words of Rabbi Tarfon” (118a). The Rif, however, quotes a variant text of Rabbi Tarfon’s opinion: “[On] the fifth [cup], one says ‘the Great *Hallel*.’” For Rashi, the *mishnayot* and the *beraita* conform, but what is the relationship between them according to the Rif’s text?

The Ba’al Ha-ma’or contends that the *mishna* and *beraita* represent two conflicting positions, and we follow the opinion of the *mishna*. Others, however, including the Rambam (*Hilkhot Chametz U-matza* 8:10), maintain that there is no disagreement between the Tannaitic sources. Rather, one is required to drink four cups, and a fifth cup is optional.

The Ra’avad’s explanation for this latter approach is what truly grabs our attention in this context:

The four cups, they based them[[13]](#footnote-13) in the *aggada* upon the four “redemptions”—“And I will take,” “and I will redeem,” “and I will rescue,” “and I will take out”; **and the fifth [cup], they already based it in the *aggada* upon “and I will bring them,”** and the Tanna [of the *mishna*] also [only] said ‘They should not withhold from him four cups,’ but one who adds to them a fifth, this is praiseworthy. (Glosses to Ba’al Ha-ma’or)[[14]](#footnote-14)

On the one hand, the Ra’avad confirms the plain reading of *Parashat Vaera* we presented earlier, in which “I will bring you to the land” amounts to a fifth stage of redemption, alongside the other four. Indeed, inheritance of the Land of Israel is part of what we celebrate on “this night,” as part of God’s fulfillment of His promises to the *Avot*, and therefore one who commemorates this fifth and final stage of redemption with a cup of wine has done something praiseworthy.[[15]](#footnote-15)

Yet even the Ra’avad acknowledges that the fifth cup is different. It stands apart from the earlier four, which represent the unblemished steps of redemption which unfolded as planned. As for the fifth stage, we can neither forget it completely nor celebrate it blissfully. The fifth cup belongs, in principle, to the same cohesive unit as the first four, but in practice we cannot drink it with as much gusto, or, in halakhic terms, as an absolute obligation.

***The Cup of Eliyahu***

Building upon the Ra’avad’s approach, I would like to offer a new interpretation of an old custom. Towards the end of the *seder*, many Jews fill an additional cup on the *seder* table, commonly called the “cup of Eliyahu.” The source and purpose of this cup is unclear, and various explanations have been offered for both its function and its name.

Both the Maharal and the Vilna Gaon take the novel approach of connecting the “cup of Eliyahu” to Rabbi Tarfon’s fifth cup. While the Maharal (as quoted by his son-in-law) instructs the *seder* leader to drink the cup, in commemoration of “and I will bring you,”[[16]](#footnote-16) the Vilna Gaon uses Rabbi Tarfon’s opinion to explain the more common practice of pouring but not consuming this fifth cup. As we have seen, divergent readings of the *Gemara* leave us with uncertainty whether to drink a fifth cup or not. Therefore, explains the Vilna Gaon, we fill a fifth cup but do not drink it, in deference to both opinions. It is called the “cup of Eliyahu” because tradition holds that when Eliyahu arrives as the harbinger of the Messiah, he will resolve all of our halakhic doubts, including this one (*Ta’amei Ha-minhagim*, *siman* 551).

Offering a variation on the Vilna Gaon’s approach, I suggest that the unusual act of filling a fifth cup but not drinking it reflects not doubt, but ambivalence. While the rulings of the Rambam, Ra’avad and others express this ambivalence by diluting the legal force of this cup, our practice perhaps encapsulates it by only going halfway. We fill the cup “with potential,” in recognition of God’s original vision for the Exodus, as told to both Avraham and Moshe. However, we will not drink it—as this part of the redemption has never reached total fulfillment—until the coming of Eliyahu, when our convoluted historical path will ultimately reach its final destination.[[17]](#footnote-17)

**Conclusion: The Exodus and the “Title” of the Land of Israel**

Finally, the very point that inspired this *shiur*—that the generation that left Egypt formally inherited the Land of Israel, even without ever reaching it themselves—may be the best proof of all that the original vision of *berit bein ha-betarim* persists. The “political” Land of Israel, as a national homeland for the Jewish people, is necessarily tied to the Exodus, because both emanate from God’s covenant with the *Avot*.

In the previous *shiur*, we delineated three stages to Jewish ownership in the Land of Israel: original acquisition by the *Avot*, God’s bequeathal to the generation of the Exodus and eventual conquest by their children, “the immigrants from Egypt.” The “title” of the Land of Israel, then, is a function of *berit Avot* at every point. It begins with the establishment of *berit Avot* and it proceeds with the fulfillment of *berit bein ha-betarim*­, disappointments and deficiencies notwithstanding.

Indeed, the sin of the spies tragically wounded the course of Jewish destiny, but not mortally. *Berit Avot* survives, and inheritance of the Land of Israel, even if now vulnerable, is inextricably linked to the historical process that brought us there. The title of the Land of Israel belongs to the land of “the immigrants from Egypt,” for this dimension of the Land is inseparable from the story of our national destiny, from Avraham to redemption.

**For Further Thought:**

1. Scholars have considered whether the elements of the *seder* that we have discussed in this *shiur* are historically sensitive or not. Specifically:

* **The recitation of “*Arami oveid avi*” during the Temple era** – R. David Tzvi Hoffman, among others, advanced the notion that perhaps the entire text of “*Arami oveid avi*” was said at *sedarim* at the time of the Temple, including the final verse of “He brought us to this place, and He gave us this land etc.” (*Devarim* 26:9). Only during exile do we omit this final verse.[[18]](#footnote-18)
* **The fifth cup in the modern era** – Following the establishment of the State of Israel, R. Menachem Mendel Kasher strongly advocated for incorporating the drinking of a fifth cup of wine into the *seder*:

And now, in our own time, when we have been privileged to behold the mercies of the Holy Name, blessed is He, and His salvation over us, in the establishment of the State of Israel, which is the beginning of redemption and salvation from the exile of Edom, even as it is written, “And I shall bring you into the land, the same which I have lifted my hand to give unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, and I have given it unto you as an inheritance: I am the Eternal”—it is fitting and proper that we observe this pious act, the drinking of the fifth cup, as a form of thanksgiving…. Just as we have been privileged to see the first realization of “And I shall bring them,” so may we be worthy of witnessing the perfect and complete redemption, the coming of the Messiah.”[[19]](#footnote-19) (*Israel Passover Haggada* [New York: American Biblical Encyclopedia Society, 1950], 171)

Each of these stances seems to presume that celebration of the Land of Israel fundamentally belongs in the *seder* and was only eliminated due to historical circumstances. If, however, we follow the Maharal’s interpretation of the sin of the spies, would our conclusions differ?

2. “*Dayyeinu*” stands out as the one place in the Haggada text where the journey that began in Egypt indeed ends in the Land of Israel and at the Temple (“that he took us out of Egypt… and brought us into the Land of Israel and built for us the Temple, to atone for all of our sins”). Furthermore, the Tashbetz suggests that *Dayyeinu* is a direct continuation of “*Arami oveid avi*” and represents the final, omitted verse (as well as the following one) that speak of arriving in the Land of Israel and reaching the Temple. With *Dayyeinu*, the Tashbetz writes, “we have completed interpreting ‘*Arami oveid avi*’ [in order] to tell about the Exodus.”[[20]](#footnote-20) Perhaps, then, the passage of “*Arami oveid avi*” is not truly truncated at all!

Still, we should take note of the substitution of “*Dayyeinu*” for the actual final verse of “*Arami oveid avi*.” Not only do we ultimately avoid the recitation of the verse, but “*Dayyeinu*” also has a subtle change in emphasis from the original verse:

* According to the *Sifrei*, *Devarim* 26:9 also contains a reference to the Temple: “‘He brought us to this place’—this is the Temple.” However, the focus of the verse and its culmination is clearly the Land of Israel—“He gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey.” In fact, the centrality of the Land of Israel to the first fruit ceremony is already established by an earlier verse: “And you will come to the *Kohen* who will be in those days, and you will say to him: ‘I have declared today to Hashem, your God, that I have come to the land that God promised our forefathers to give us’” (26:3).[[21]](#footnote-21)

Furthermore, the *Sifrei* continues: “In reward for our coming to ‘this place’”—the Temple—“[God] gives us ‘this land.’” In the context of “*Arami oveid avi*,” the Temple, logically, **precedes** the Land of Israel and is a vehicle through which to achieve the ultimate goal of dwelling in the Land.

* In *Dayyeinu*, inheriting the Land of Israel is one further step towards the greater gift of the Temple, “to atone for all of our sins.” The final destination is a spiritual one, rather than a national one.[[22]](#footnote-22) As such, *Dayyeinu* may be the culmination of the spiritual journey in the Haggada that begins with “In the beginning our forefathers were idol worshippers, and now God has drawn us to His worship,” rather than the conclusion of the storyline of *berit bein ha-betarim*.[[23]](#footnote-23)

In this case, “*Dayyeinu*” may not pose a challenge to our earlier depiction of the *seder*.

However, while this description of “*Dayyeinu*” may be true for the Tashbetz, a medieval commentary to the *Haggada* of unknown authorship specifically returns the focus of “*Dayyeinu*” to the Land of Israel. It explains that the benefit of the Temple is “to atone for our sins **so that we are not exiled from our place**.”[[24]](#footnote-24) Similar to the *Sifrei*, this commentary sees the Temple as a pathway to the Land of Israel, rather than the other way around. “*Dayyeinu*,” then, is consistent with the original context of “*Arami oveid avi*” and covers the full arc of Jewish history, from Egypt to the Land of Israel, that we otherwise avoid at the *seder*.

1. *Berit bein ha-betarim* does not appear explicitly in *Sefer Shemot*; however, see 3:21-22, 11:2 and 12:35-36, 40-42. Also see *Mekhilta*, *Bo* 14 and *Megilla* 9a. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Also see *Shemot* 3:16-17, 12:25, 13:5, 13:11 and 15:16-17, as well as *Devarim* 6:23, *Yechezkel* 20:6 and *Tehillim* 105. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. See Ritva *Bava Batra* 100a. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. See [shiur #8](http://vbm-torah.org/archive/sinai/08sinai.htm), note 9 regarding translation of the phrase “*Arami oveid avi*.” [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. On the connection between “*Arami oveid avi*” and *berit bein ha-betarim* see my teacher R. Menachem Leibtag, “Understanding Maggid – a Biblical Perspective,” available at <http://www.tanach.org/special/magid.doc>. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Chizkuni (15:7), on the one hand, most clearly notes the distinct textual units, but on the other hand, claims that the second one—*berit bein ha-betarim*—actually preceded the first one by five years! Paradoxically, while undermining the historical proximity of these two promises, his interpretation further emphasizes the textual unity of *Bereishit* 15: The Torah has taken two temporally separated events and purposely juxtaposed them, in his words, “in order to link the units in which Avraham was informed of progeny.” [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. See Ramban *Bamidbar* 14:17: “[The Jewish people] were rebelling against their forefathers and did not desire their gift, which the *Avot* favored so much.” [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. That Yehoshua, instead of Moshe, must lead the Jewish people into the Land of Israel is mentioned in conjunction with the sin of the spies in *Devarim* (1:37-38; see Seforno and Or Ha-chayyim, in contrast to Ramban). Perhaps this also reflects the discontinuity between the redemption from Egypt, which Moshe singlehandedly executed (*Devarim* 34:11-12), and the conquest of the Land, in which he will not participate. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Consequently, Rabbi Natan bar Yosef maintains that the Torah reading for the ninth of Av ought to be about the sin of the spies (*Megilla* 31b). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. These verses follow a description of the sin of the spies: “They were disgusted with a coveted land; they did not trust His word. They grumbled in their tents; they did not listen to the voice of God” (*Tehillim* 106:24-25). Also see *Yechezkel* 20:23.

    Searching for a hint of this punishment in the Torah text itself, the Ramban (*Bamidbar* 14:1) notes the wording of the verse, “And I will bring [your children], and they will know the Land” (14:31). He suggests, “‘I will bring them’ [for] now, that they will know the Land with [cursory] ‘knowledge’ alone, but not that they will inherit it for generations.” Following his lead, we might specifically contrast the wording of *Bamidbar* 14:30-31 with that of *Shemot* 6:8. However, see *Devarim* 1:39. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. The Rama also offers a second explanation; the Vilna Gaon (*Bi’ur Ha-Gra*) suggests yet a third. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Also see *Eikha Rabbati* 3:13. *Beit Ha-Levi* )*Shemot* 12:8(, however, offers a different approach to this *midrash*. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Our text of the Ra’avad reads “*samkhuha*” with regard to the four cups and “*samkhuhu*” with regard to the fifth. My translation presumes that they should be switched. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Also see *Temim Dei’im* 30 and *Orechot Chayyim*, *Hilkhot Leil Ha-Pesach*, 13 in the name of the Ra’avad. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Also see *Da’at Zekeinim Mi-ba’alei Ha-Tosafot* *Shemot* 12:8:

    The four cups are symbolic of the four redemptions—“and I will take out,” “and I will rescue,” “and I will redeem,” “and I will take,” and the fifth cup, that is, for one who needs to drink, is symbolic of “and I will bring,” for that, too, is redemption, as people say… “a slave whose master has freed him and given him his goblet in his hand, but he did not bring him to his home, what help will all this good be?” So too, if the Holy One, blessed be He, had not brought us to the Land of Israel, what help would the departure from Egypt be to them? [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. See *Divrei Negidim*, printed in *Haggada shel Pesach La-Maharal* (Bnei Brak, 1980), 176. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. *Mori ve-rabbi* R. Yosef Zvi Rimon similarly links Eliyahu to the future fulfillment of “and I will bring you.” Also see his observation that filling but not drinking a fifth cup might be suggested by the Rambam’s formulation (*Hilkhot Chametz U-matza* 8:10; *Haggada for Pesach: Shirat Miriam*, 334-335). [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Responsa *Melamed Leho’il* 3:65. For an extensive review of the topic, see R. Yosef Tabory, “*Al Nusach Ha-Haggada Bi-zeman Ha-bayit*,” *Sinai* 82, 97-108. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. For a lengthy essay about the fifth cup, see R. Kasher’s *Haggada Sheleima*, appendix 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. *Haggada shel Pesach Torat Chayyim* (Jerusalem, 1998), 132-133, 141. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. However, see Ramban’s second interpretation. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Consequently, the Tashbetz highlights here the Land of Israel’s spiritual quality as “the place of the Divine presence” (140) rather than its role in national destiny. From this perspective, of course, the building of the Temple is “the culmination of all the kindnesses” (141). [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Regarding the *mishna*’s requirement that we “start with blemishes and we end with praise” (*Pesachim* 116a), see Rambam, *Hilkhot Chametz U-matza* 7:4 and R. Tabory’s article above. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. “*Peirush Kadmon*,” printed in *Haggada shel Pesach Torat Chayyim*, 142. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)