YESHIVAT HAR ETZION

ISRAEL KOSCHITZKY VIRTUAL BEIT MIDRASH (VBM)

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**Talmudic *Aggadot***

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Shiur #26: *Aggadot* of *Pesachim* II: Searching and Seeing

# Introduction

# In the [previous *shiur*](http://etzion.org.il/en/shiur-25-aggadot-pesachim-i-light-and-dark), we discussed an aggadic passage that occupies the first few pages of chapter 1 of Tractate *Pesachim* in the Babylonian Talmud. This *aggada* deals with light and darkness, as it analyzes the first word of the tractate, *or*. When the *mishna* states that the search for *chametz* is to take place “*or le-arba asar*,” does this indicate the day of the fourteenth of Nissan or the previous night?

# As we analyzed the various proof-texts cited to support each position, it became clear that this *sugya*’s role goes beyond the formalistic experimentation to clarify the *mishna*’s intent as to whether *or* refers to day or night, as it is unambiguously clear that the search for leaven is to be done during the night of the fourteenth. It appears that the *sugya* uses the clarification of the terminology as an excuse, as it were, to set out a full literary and conceptual structure, which may be divided by era: The biblical sources tend to indicate that *or* is daytime, while the sources from the literature of *Chazal* tend to indicate that *or* is nighttime.

Found at the beginning of the first part of Tractate *Pesachim* (what we defined as the *chametz* unit, as opposed to later portions that delve into the *mitzvot* of eating *matza* and bringing the Pesach offering), this discussion raises the concepts of light and darkness and the connection between them as a matter connected to the character of the holiday of Pesach. Indeed, we have seen that the topic of light and darkness is an essential one in the inherent nature of the holiday, and it therefore appears that it is no coincidence that this issue occupies a prominent position at the opening of the tractate, even if there is no concrete need for it in terms of interpreting the *mishna*. This is merely a pretext, as it were, to present an essential subject at the opening of the tractate.

In this *shiur*, we will jump to the end of the *chametz* unit in this tractate, and we will analyze its contents in the Babylonian Talmud. The *mishna*y*ot* that conclude chapter 3 and the *chametz* unit in its entirety, as we have seen previously, deal with one who forgets to get rid of *chametz* or the flesh of offerings that must be destroyed under various circumstances:

If one is on his way to slaughter his Pesach offering or to circumcise his son or to dine at a betrothal feast at the house of his father-in-law, **and he remembers that he has *chametz* at home** – **if he is able** to go back, remove [it], and [then] return to his religious duty, he must go back and remove [it]; **but if not,** he annuls it in his heart.

[If he is on his way] to save from an invasion or from a river or from brigands or from a fire or from a collapse [of a building], he annuls it in his heart. [But if] to rest for pleasure, he must return immediately.

Similarly, one who went out of Jerusalem and remembered that he had the flesh of offerings with him – if he has passed Tzofim (Scopus), he burns it where he is; but if not, he returns and burns it in front of the Temple with the wood of the [altar] pile.

And for what [quantity] must they return? R. Meir says: For both, when there is as much as an egg. R. Yehuda says: For both, when there is as much as an olive. But the Sages say: For flesh of offerings, when there is as much as an olive; for *chametz*, when there is as much as an egg. (Mishna *Pesachim* 3:7-8)

**The *Aggada* at the End of Chapter 3**

In the Babylonian Talmud (50a), chapter 3 concludes with an aggadic passage expounding a number of verses from the fourteenth and final chapter of the book of *Zekharya*. Prior to this, the *sugya* contains a brief halakhic debate about the measurements mentioned in the eighth *mishna* (volume of an olive vs. volume of an egg). Immediately after this discussion, the *gemara* cites *Zekharya* 14:9 and expounds it, without any apparent connection to the preceding halakhic discussion or to the *mishna*y*ot* that conclude the chapter. This leads the *gemara* to continue expounding verses from that chapter of *Zekharya*.

The sharp transition to the verses from *Zekharya*, without any link, raises questions about the connection of this aggadic section to the *sugya*. The ostensible association is the *derasha* appearing in its middle, concerning *Zekharya* 14:20:

“On that day, there will be inscribed on the bells of the horses: ‘Holy to the Lord.’” What does “on the bells (*metzilot*) of the horses” mean?

R. Yehoshua ben Levi says: The Holy One, blessed be He, is destined to add to Jerusalem as far as a horse can run and cast its shadow (*matzil*).

This *derasha*, which talks about expanding the borders of Jerusalem, at least has some presumed connection to the eighth *mishna*, which discusses “he who went out of Jerusalem… if he has passed Tzofim (Scopus)” as regards disposing of the flesh of offerings.[[1]](#footnote-1) Indeed, this is the connection in the parallel *sugya* in the Jerusalem Talmud (*Pesachim* 3:3, 30b), which cites at the beginning of that passage the *derasha* of R. Yehoshua ben Levi alone.[[2]](#footnote-2)

The expanded aggadic section cited in the Babylonian Talmud consists of three parts. In each of the three parts, a verse is cited from *Zekharya* 14, v. 6, v. 20 and v. 9 respectively.

And it will be on that day, there will not be *or yekarot ve-kipaon*.

On that day, there will be inscribed on the bells of the horses, “Holy to the Lord,” and the cooking pots in the Lord’s house will be like the sacred bowls in front of the altar.

The Lord will be king over the whole earth. On that day, the Lord will be one and His name one.

These three verses have in common the formula “on that day (*ba-yom ha-hu*),”[[3]](#footnote-3) and their juxtaposition in the *aggada* thus defines its topic, “that day.” This phrase generally indicates the future redemption,[[4]](#footnote-4) which also relates to the opening verse of the chapter in *Zekharya*: “Behold, a day is coming for the Lord.”

In the first two parts of the *aggada*, the *derashot* of three *Amora’im* from the Land of Israel are cited: R. Yochanan, R. Yehoshua ben Levi, and R. Elazar. In the third part, the *derasha* of R. Acha bar Chanina appears, setting off a discussion which partially takes place in Babylonia.[[5]](#footnote-5)

The first part of the *aggada* cites three *derashot* on v. 6:

"And it will be on that day, there will not be *or yekarot ve-kipaon.”* What is the meaning of the terms *“yekarot”* and *“kipaon”*?

R. Elazar taught: This means that the light, which is precious (*yakar*) in this world, is considered of no value (*kafui*) in the World to Come.

R. Yochanan taught: These refer to *Nega’im* [the tractate dealing with the laws of *tzara’at*] and *Ohalot* [the tractate dealing with defilement to the dead], which are heavy in this world, but light in the World to Come.

R. Yehoshua ben Levi taught: These refer to people who are honored in this world, but will be considered unimportant in the World to Come.

The verse that opens the *aggada* may be understood as describing an initial stage, in which there will not be *or*, but rather *yekarot* and *kipaon*, terms describing cold[[6]](#footnote-6) and darkness.[[7]](#footnote-7) However, the next verse (7) indicates that light will arrive at the next stage:

It will be a unique day — a day known only to the Lord — with no distinction between day and night. When evening comes, there will be light.

This leads to God’s kingship two verses later: “The Lord will be king…”

R. Elazar’s *derasha* emphasizes the following point: In this world, *or* is *yakar*, precious and rare,[[8]](#footnote-8) but in the World to Come (i.e. in the future), it will be more common and available.[[9]](#footnote-9)

In the second part of the *aggada*, we encounter R. Yehoshua ben Levi – whose *derasha*, as noted, provides the point of connection to the *sugya* – as well as the two other *Amora’im*, R. Yochanan and R. Elazar.[[10]](#footnote-10)

The third part of the *aggada* continues to expound *Zekharya* 14, completing the idea of the future redemption appearing in the first part. As in the first part, here as well the basis of the *derashot* is a comparison of this world to the World to Come. Much like the great light appearing at evening expressing God’s kingship on the day on which the distinction between day and night is erased, so too we find in this part of the *aggada* the idea of totality concerning God’s name and His dominion over the land:

“The Lord will be king over the whole earth. On that day, the Lord will be one and His name one.” Is He not one now?

R. Acha bar Chanina says: Not like this world is the World to Come. In this world, over good tidings one declares, “He is good, and He does good,” while for evil tidings he says, “Blessed be the true Judge;” [whereas] in the World to Come, it will be only, “He is good and He does good.”

“And His name one” — What does “one” mean? Is His name not one now?

R. Nachman bar Yitzchak says: Not like this world is the World to Come. [In] this world, [His name] is written *yud*-*hei* [the Tetragrammaton] and read as *alef*-*dalet* [“Lord”]*;* but in the World to Come it will all be one: it will be written with *yud*-*hei* and read as *yud*-*hei*.

Now, Rava thought of speaking about this at the session, [whereupon] a certain old man said to him: [God speaks of the Tetragrammaton as His name *le-olam,* forever, in *Shemot* 3:15, but] it is spelled [without a *vav*, as if it means] “*le-alem*” (to be hidden).

God’s oneness is expressed by the completion of His kingship, the totality of His rule: "In the World to Come, it will be only ‘He is good and He does good’” — the absolute dominion of the good, akin to the dominion of light and the nullification of the darkness.

The second part of the *derasha*, which relates to the oneness of God’s name, also relates to the *derasha* of R. Yochanan that appears in the first part of the *aggada* about the obscure parts of the Torah, and the concept of revealing the hidden appears here as well. *Nega’im* and *Ohalot*, the esoteric parts of the Torah, are practically unknowable, much as God’s name is also “obscured” in this world and will only be fully revealed in the World to Come. The parallel between the third part of the *aggada* on *Zekharya* and its first part strengthens the cohesiveness of the passage. This association demonstrates that this *aggada* is well-edited; it is not merely an incidental collection of *derashot* about the verses of *Zekharya*.

We can delve more deeply into the various details of this *aggada*, but the essence of our discussion here is designed to demonstrate how it creates, together with the beginning of chapter 1, a conceptual unity that builds a framework for the first arc of the tractate, which deals with *chametz* and its destruction. What leads the *gemara* to expand its canvas beyond the *derasha* of R. Yehoshua ben Levi, as cited in the parallel *sugya* in the Jerusalem Talmud? What were the considerations for the arrangement of this exegetical *aggada*?

Indeed, the discussion is not arranged well in terms of the biblical order; the order of the citations in the *aggada* is the sixth, the twentieth, and the ninth verses. Moreover, if the verses are already out of order, we would expect that the connection of these *derashot* to the *mishna* – the *derasha* of R. Yehoshua ben Levi – would appearat the beginning of the *aggada.* In fact, however, that *derasha* appears in the middle of the *aggada*!

It is difficult to answer these questions with certainty. However, we may hypothesize that the redactors of the Babylonian Talmud collected *derashot* about the verses of *Zekharya* 14, perhaps from a Midrashic source that is not in our hands today, and they created from them an edited and reorganized *aggada*, according to their judgement. The *aggada* opens with the motif of light and dark, and specifically the appearance of a ray of light out of the great darkness as an expression of redemption. By opening the *aggada* with this motif, a connection is created to the *aggada* at the opening of chapter 1, which deals, as we have seen above, with light and dark.

This connection is, in fact, bidirectional, as in the opening *sugya,* a number of biblical proofs that tie into the future redemption are cited (2a-b):

An objection is raised: “As the light of [*or*] the morning, when the sun rises” proves that *or* means the daytime!

Is it then written that *or* is morning? Surely it is written, “As the light of [*or*] the morning,” and this is its meaning: Just as the “light of the morning” is in this world, so will the rising of the sun be unto the righteous in the World to Come…

An objection is raised: “If I say: Surely the darkness will overwhelm me, and the light [*or*] about me will be night” — surely this proves that *or* is day?

There David said thus: I thought, surely darkness will overwhelm me in the World to Come, which resembles day; but now, even this world, which resembles night, is light about me.

In these two proof-texts, the difference between this world and the World to Come is expressed through concepts of light and dark. The World to Come is characterized by the statements “so will the rising of the sun be unto the righteous”[[11]](#footnote-11) and “which resembles day.”

The connection between Pesach and the future redemption through the motif of light is not exclusive to the Babylonian Talmud. *Zekharya* 14:7 speaks of the increase of light, which the sixth-century poet from the Land of Israel, Yannai, ties to Pesach in the famous ode that is included in the final unit of the *Haggada* on the Seder night, “*Az Rov Nissim*.”[[12]](#footnote-12)

Bring near the day is that is neither day nor night.

Most High, make known that Yours is the day as well as the night.

Appoint sentries [to guard] Your city all day and all night.

Illuminate like day the dark of night.

It is interesting to note that the conclusion of the *aggada* of *Zekharya* in chapter 3 also connects to the redemption from Egypt, as the *derasha* of R. Avina that concludes the *aggada* – the *pasuk* describing an incomplete state in which God’s name must be hidden – is taken from the passage of the burning bush, the introductory scene of the redemption from Egypt. This follows immediately after the old man’s comment to Rava, as cited above:

R. Avina pointed out a contradiction: It is written (*Shemot* 3:15), “This is my name, to be hidden;” [but it is also written], “and this is my memorial unto all generations”?

The Holy One, blessed be He, said: Not as I [i.e., My name] am written am I read; I am written with a *yud*-*hei*, while I am read as *alef*-*dalet.*

**The Framework of the *Chametz* Unit and Its Meaning**

In light of the connections that we have noted between this *aggada* and the *aggada* at the beginning of the tractate, on the literal and thematic planes (and particularly in the introduction of the *aggada* of chapter 3 with the *derasha* on light and dark, elements which are literally and thematically central in the *aggada* of chapter 1), we may suggest that these two *aggada* sections create a literally framework for this unit, which deals with *chametz* and its destruction.[[13]](#footnote-13) The two *aggadot* include the motif of coming out from darkness to light, a motif common to the redemption from Egypt and the future redemption and occupying an important symbolic role in both of them.

As mentioned above, the motif of light and dark is practically connected to the content of the unit, the *mitzva* of destroying *chametz*, as in the search for it, we illuminate the darkness by candlelight. This framework ties the *mitzva* of destroying *chametz* to the two redemptions, thus illuminating new facets, containing aggadic and conceptual elements, beyond the formal fulfillment of the *mitzva*.

What is the conceptual message that the literary framework gives to the unit dealing with the *mitzva* of destroying *chametz*? As we have noted, it is difficult to answer this with certainty, but the juxtaposition and the link between the framework and the unit of *chametz* allows us to propose a logical hypothesis.

The motif of light and dark that appears in the two *aggadot* recalls the redemption from Egypt, and it appears explicitly in the description of the future redemption in the *aggada* of *Zekharya*. This is a divine act to which a human act is connected, as He commands us to illuminate the darkness by candlelight and to eliminate all leaven in our domains. This idea appears explicitly in later sources, but it may be that the roots of it are reflected here, symbolically tying the destruction of *chametz* to the elimination of evil from the world.[[14]](#footnote-14)

This idea may be strengthened by the fact that the link between the search for *chametz* by candlelight and the search for evil and its destruction by God at the redemption arises not only in the framework of the Talmudic unit that discusses the destruction of *chametz*, but even appears in it, midrashically, in one *sugya* in the unit under discussion:

How do we know this? R. Chisda says: By deriving “finding” from “finding,” “finding” from “searching,” “searching” from “searching,” “searching” from “candles,” and “candles” from “candle”…

“Searching” from “candles,” as it is written: “And it will be at that time that **I will search Jerusalem by candles**” (*Tzefanya* 1:12) and “candles” from “candle,” as it is written (*Mishlei* 20:27): “The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the innermost parts of his being.” (*Pesachim* 7b)[[15]](#footnote-15)

In this *sugya*, which cites the chain of *derashot* to explain the source for this requirement, it appears that there is the intent, midrashically, to derive something from the cited verses about the nature of searching for *chametz*, and not only in terms of the character of its technical execution.

The verse from *Tzefanya* connects us to the idea of searching for and eliminating evil in the future. This is clear from the biblical context of the verse, which includes analogies that are tied to the motif of light and dark:

And it will be at that time that **I will search Jerusalem by candles,** and I will punish those men who are hardened on their lees,

Who think, “The Lord will do nothing, either good or bad…”

That day will be a day of wrath

A day of distress and anguish,

A day of trouble and ruin,

**A day of darkness and gloom,**

**A day of clouds and blackness.** (*Tzefanya* 1:12-15)

In the final verse cited in the discussion, “The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the innermost parts of his being” (*Mishlei* 20:27), the search for *chametz* by way of candles is associated with a search of “the innermost parts of his being” by God,[[16]](#footnote-16) a search that is tied to the aspect of good and evil in man.

**Some Final Observations**

To conclude, I would like to note a number of things concerning the *derasha* of R. Yochanan, which appears in the *aggada* of chapter 3. It may be that these points have ramifications about the integration of the entire *aggada* in the Gemara at the end of chapter 3.

R. Yochanan taught: These refer to *Nega’im* and *Ohalot*, which are heavy in this world, but light in the World to Come.

This *derasha* is cited in the first part of the *aggada*, after the *derasha* of R. Elazar, which we discussed above. R. Yochanan similarly expounds the verse as a reference to the future redemption, but according to his *derasha*, the future redemption illuminates in a more precise way – by shedding light on esoteric parts of the Torah, *Nega’im* and *Ohalot* specifically. According to his *derasha*, these parts of the Torah, “which are heavy in this world” – i.e. those that are challenging, which are not well-understood and not accessible for most students – will be “light in the World to Come.” In other words, they will rise to the surface, becoming revealed, simple, and obvious for all those who study them.[[17]](#footnote-17)

In the context of this *derasha*, it is interesting to consider a parallel *midrash* from *Pesiketa De-Rav Kahana*:

“And they will take for you a cow” *(Bamidbar* 19:2)… The Holy One Blessed Be He said to him: Moshe, to you I will reveal all the matters of the cow, but for others it must remain a dictate…

“And it will be on that day, there will not be *or yekarot ve-kipaon*” — It is spelled *yikpaun*, indicating that those matters that are concealed from you in this world will become as clear for you as a crystal ball, as it says (*Yeshayahu* 42:16), “I will lead the blind by ways they have not known, along unfamiliar paths [I will guide them]…”

As R. Acha said: Matters that were not revealed to Moshe at Sinai were revealed to R. Akiva and his colleagues, as it says (*Iyov* 28:10), “And every precious thing (*yakar*) his eye has seen” — this refers to R. Akiva. (*Pesikta De-Rav Kahana*,ch. 4, ed. Mandelbaum, vol. I, p. 72)

This *midrash*, which was apparently edited before the conclusion of the Babylonian Talmud, may have indeed been available to its redactors. The concern of the *midrash* is parallel to the words of R. Yochanan in the Babylonian Talmud. The *midrash* expounds the verse in *Zekharya* in the context of “those matters which are concealed from you in this world,” which will become revealed in the World to Come.

The context is the passage of the *para aduma*, something related to the *Ohalot* mentioned by R. Yochanan, and the words of the earlier *darshan* who describes God telling Moshe, “To you I will reveal all the matters of the cow, but for others it must remain a dictate.” Later on, this knowledge of such abstruse concepts in the Torah is attributed to R. Akiva specifically.[[18]](#footnote-18)

The verb used by the *midrash* in the *derasha* paralleling that of R. Yochanan is “those matters which are concealed from you in this world will become as clear for you as a crystal ball.” The term used for becoming clear is “*tzafin*,” much like R. Yochanan’s “*kefuyin*” — both indicating something that floats on the surface. However, the *darshan* employs a simile as well: “as a crystal ball,” literally a *bolus*.

What exactly is this *bolus*? Most commentators take it to be a mirror or glass. This is how the *Arukh*, Sokoloff, and Jastrow render it,[[19]](#footnote-19) and this is how Mandelbaum explains it in his glosses on *Pesiketa De-Rav Kahana*, citing *Bereishit* *Rabba* 12:13 and the *Arukh*. However, it is difficult to see how a mirror would float and rise to the surface of the water. Therefore, Stephen Wald suggests an explanation offered to him by Daniel Sperber, that this *bolus* is the Greek word for net, which would float and rise to the surface.[[20]](#footnote-20)

Another possibility is that “*tzafin*” here does not have anything to do with floating, but is related instead to the place-name Tzofim, which literally means Scopus, i.e. watching, seeing, observing. According to this interpretation, it is more fitting to translate *bolus* here as mirror. This is how Jastrow explains the entire phrase: “perspicuous (clear) as crystal.”

This translation may seem more forced than that of Sperber, but it remains intriguing, as a later *midrash* that is parallel to the *Pesiketa* clearly embraces it:

Those matters that are concealed from you in this world will become *tzofim* in the World to Come, like those blind who see, as it says (*Yeshayahu* 42:16), “I will lead the blind by ways they have not known…” (*Bamidbar* *Rabba* 19:6)

This *midrash* seems like a later reincarnation of its predecessor, in which the verse cited from *Yeshayahu* explicitly speaks of the blind, and perhaps because of the *bolus*, the formulation changes to “like those blind who see.” The transition from *tzafin* to *tzofim* is a simple one. According to this interpretation, *tzafin* in the *Pesiketa* has a double meaning: it denotes floating on the surface, in accordance with the *derasha* of R. Yochanan, but it also implies *tzofim*, in the sense of seeing or watching. Explaining *tzafin* as related to visibility, at least according to this late *midrash*, and the mention of R. Akiva’s unique ability to perceive that which others could not recalls the famous *aggada* at the end of Tractate *Makkot* (24b), in which R. Akiva, who can look beyond the ruins before him, laughs:

Another time they were coming up to Jerusalem together, and just as they came to Mount Scopus, they rent their garments. When they reached the Temple Mount, they saw a fox emerging from the Holy of Holies. They burst out crying, but R. Akiva laughed.

They said to him: “Why are you laughing?”

He replied… “In *Zekharya* (8:4), it is written, ‘Thus says the Lord of Hosts, There shall yet old men and old women sit in the broad places of Jerusalem.’ So long as Uriah's [threatening] prophecy had not had its fulfilment, I had misgivings lest *Zekharya*'s prophecy might not be fulfilled; now that Uriah's prophecy has been [literally] fulfilled, it is quite certain that *Zekharya*'s prophecy also is to find its literal fulfilment.

They said to him: “Akiva, you have comforted us! Akiva, you have comforted us.”

Perhaps the Babylonian Talmud also explains the parallel in the *Pesiketa* as it is interpreted in *Bamidbar* *Rabba*. If so, these parallels tie R. Yochanan’s words in the first part of the *aggada* in our *sugya* to the *mishna* concerning which the *aggada* is cited. The *mishna* discusses leaving Jerusalem and passing Tzofim, while the *Pesiketa* talks about *tzafin*, and the *aggada* in *Makkot* describes the reverse journey (from Scopus to the Temple Mount), which recalls to R. Akiva the prophecy of *Zekharya* 8. It may be that these *aggadot* were on the minds of the redactors of the *sugya* at the end of chapter 3 of Tractate *Pesachim* when they chose to integrate into it the *aggada* of *Zekharya* 14.

Translated by Yoseif Bloch

1. As Rashi writes, *Pesachim* 50a, s.v. *yekarot ve-kipaon*. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. After the *derasha*, the Jerusalem Talmud goes on to a brief halakhic discussion of the *mishna*, which concludes the chapter. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. In total, *Zekharya* 14 contains six verses that invoke the phrase “on that day.” [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The meaning of “that day” becomes clear throughout the *aggadot* of *Chazal* as referring mostly to the era of the future redemption, in the cosmic sense — what is referred to here as the World to Come. However, this *aggada* also has (in its first part) another interpretation of “that day.” This alternative meaning of the phrase “the World to Come” in the literature of *Chazal* appears, for example, in Mishna *Sanhedrin* 10:1: “And these are those who have no portion in the World to Come.” This is a clear reference to the afterlife, the world of souls, the plane of personal reward and punishment. Concerning this, see E.E. Urbach, *Chazal: Emunot Ve-De’ot* (Jerusalem: 1971), pp. 587-589.

Without addressing the complexity of the meaning of “the World to Come” in the literature of *Chazal*, we may suffice with saying that at least in this *sugya*, there is no sharp distinction; both meanings are used interchangeably. However, the dominant meaning is clearly that of cosmic redemption, the eschatological sense — the world in which absolute good will rule, unlike the contemporary world, which is characterized by a constant battle between good and evil. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The statement of R. Nachman bar Yitzchak and a small matter about Rava. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Targum Yonatan understand the word this way, and Rashi follows his view. Ibn Ezra and Radak have a different view; see their commentaries ad loc. See M. Zer-Kavod’s commentary in the *Da’at Mikra* series (Jerusalem, 1990), p. 57. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. This is the traditional reading, although the spelling is actually “*or yekarot yikpaun*,” a *yud* being the initial letter of the last word rather than a *vav*. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Cf. *I Shemuel* 1:3. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. After the *derasha* of R. Elazar, the *derashot* of R. Yochanan and R. Yehoshua ben Levi are cited. (Apparently, the redactor of the *sugya* had these together with the *derasha* of R. Elazar, as one can see in the second part of the *aggada*, in which v. 20 is expounded by the same three sages). We will therefore comment on them briefly.

The second *derasha* is that of R. Yochanan, who apparently expounds the verse as referring to the future redemption as well, but the enlightening focuses on a more precise facet in this redemption, which is tied to the more obscure parts of the Torah, *Nega’im* and *Ohalot*. In fact, this *derasha* connects thematically to its predecessor, as the use of the metaphor of *or* concerning Torah is well known and does not require proof; see at greater length below.

The third *derasha* is that of R. Yehoshua ben Levi, and it brings us, as mentioned above in n. 4, to another meaning of the World to Come – the world of judgement and of the souls, which the *derasha* presents as revealing the true nature of people, which is sometimes at odds with their image and their status in this world. The *derasha* is illustrated by a narrative whose protagonists are the author of the *derasha*, R. Yehoshua ben Levi, and his son. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. The rest of the *derashot* in this part do not contribute to the central idea of the *aggada* that dominates the first part and the third part. They are more local to the chapter in *Zekharya*, but they are cited incidentally because of R. Yehoshua ben Levi’s *derasha,* as all three *derashot* are brought in the first part. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. The connection between creation and the ultimate redemption by way of the motif of light, as appears in the second proof-text mentioned here, appears in the famous *midrash* from *Bereishit* *Rabba*, ch. 3: “It has been taught: The light created during the six days of creation could not illuminate by day, as it would blot out the sphere of the sun; nor could it illuminate by night, but rather by day. So where is it? Hidden for the righteous in the future, as it says (*Yeshayahu* 30:26): “The moon will shine like the sun, and the sunlight will be seven times brighter, like the light of seven full days.” See also, in the Babylonian Talmud, *Pesachim* 68a and *Sanhedrin* 91b; as well as *Pesiketa* *Rabbati*, ch. 42. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. This is part of the *Kerova* for *Shabbat Ha-Gadol* or for the first day of Pesach. See D. Goldschmidt, *Haggada shel Pesach* (Jerusalem, 1960), p. 96; M.M. Kasher, *Haggada Sheleima* (Jerusalem, 1967), p. 188. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. It is possible that the considerations of integrating the *aggada* in the introduction of chapter 1 are broader, as the passage opens the tractate as a whole, and beyond the common theme of dark and light, it touches on many themes in *Tanakh* and the literature of *Chazal*. However, as stated above, concerning the light and dark intertwined in this *aggada*, there is a specific link to the *mitzva* of destroying *chametz*. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. In Jewish thought, in Kabbala, and in Chasidic philosophy, this ideas is substantially developed; see in particular *Sefer Maor Va-Shemesh,* Pesach, s.v. *u-vagemara*: “For behold it is known that *chametz* has the aspect of the Evil Inclination, while *matza* alludes to the Good Inclination.” [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. This *sugya* expands on an idea which appears in the Tosefta: “For searching by candle is far better. Even though there is no proof, there is an allusion: ‘And it shall be at that time that I will search Jerusalem by candles,’ and it says: ‘The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the innermost parts of his being.’” However, in the Tosefta, it appears that the verses that are cited are only an allusion on the linguistic plane; it is difficult to discern with certainty a conceptual link between searching for *chametz* and the ideas that appear in them. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. See Y. Kil, *Da’at Mikra*, *Mishlei*, p. 145. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. See E. Ben Yehuda, *Dictionary of the Hebrew Language*, s.v. *Kafa*, pp. 6059-6060. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. The connection between Moshe and R. Akiva recalls the famous *aggada* in Babylonian Talmud *Menachot* 29b. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. *Arukh Ha-Shalem*, p. 92ff.; Sokoloff, *Dictionary of Galilean Aramaic*, s.v. *Bolus* (p. 87); Jastrow, s.v. *Bolus* (p. 146). [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Stephen G. Wald, *Perek* Elu *Ovrin: Bavli Pesachim, Perek Shelishi: Mahadurah Bikortit im Be'ur Makif* (New York and Jerusalem, 2000), p. 57, n. 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)