

לגמור את ההלל / לקרוא את ההלל

It is the practice among Ashkenazim to recite the ברכה לקרוא את ההלל whenever they recite any form of ההלל. Not so among Sephardim. Some Sephardic communities recite the ברכה לקרוא את ההלל when they say בדילוג ההלל while all Sephardic communities recite the ברכה לקרוא את ההלל when they recite the complete ההלל. What is the basis for these practices? רב עמרם גאון provides the following for ראש חודש:

סדר רב עמרם גאון (הרפנס) סדר ראש חודש—ובצבור לאחר שמסיים שליח צבור העובר לפני התיבה סדר התפלה, מברך ברוך אתה ה' א—להינו מלך העולם אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו לקרוא את ההלל. וקורין הלל בדילוג.

Translation: In a quorum of ten men, after the prayer leader completes Shemona Esrei, he recites the Bracha: Asher Kid'Y'Shanu . . . Likro Es Ha'Hallel. They then recite Hallel with omissions.

He then provides the following for the days on which the complete ההלל is recited:

סדר רב עמרם גאון (הרפנס) סדר פסח—כך הוא סדר קדוש והגדה ואכילת שאר ירקות ומרור בלילי פסח. ובשחרית כי מסיימי צבורא ברכותיהו אומר החזן ברוך שאמר עד מהולל בתשבחות, ופתח טוב להודות לה', וענו צבורא טוב להודות לה' וכו' פסוקי דזמרה כדרבנן. ואומר חזן נשמת, ויושע עד כי אני ה' רופאך, והוא רחום, קדיש עד דאמירן בעלמא. ופתח ברכו, וענו ברוך ויוצר, כולו כדרבנן עד גאל ישראל. ומצלי צבורא בלחש כמו בערבית ונחית שליח צבורא ואומר אבות וגבורות וקדושה, אתה בחרתנו, יעלה ויבא, והשיאנו, רצה ומודים וסלקי כהני, מודים ופרסי כהני ידיהו. ומברכי כולא צבורא בא"י אמ"ה אקב"ו לגמור את ההלל. וגומרים אותו. ואומר יהללך כדכתיבנא ואומר החזן קדיש כולו.

Translation: That completes the description of the Seder and the recital of the Haggadah, the eating of a variety of vegetables and Marror on the night of Pesach. The next morning, after those congregated complete Birchos Ha'Shachar, the prayer leader says: Baruch Sh'Amar until Mibullal Ba'Tisbbachos. After reciting Baruch Sh'Amar, the prayer leader then calls out: Tov L'Hodos Lashem and those congregated respond with: Tov L'Hodos Lashem and they complete Pseukei D'Zimra. The prayer leader says Nishmas, Va'Yosha until Ki Ani Hashem Rofecha, V'Hu Rachum and half Kaddish. He then calls out: Barchu and they respond: Baruch. They recite the Bracha of Yotzer, in the form transmitted to us by our Sages, and continue until the Bracha of Ga'Al Yisroel. The congregation recites Shemona Esrei silently in the same form that they followed at Tefilas Arvis, the night before. The prayer leader repeats Shemona Esrei. He says: Avos, Gevuros and Kedushah, Ata Bichartanu, Ya' Aleh V'Yavo, V'Ha'A'Si' AINU, Ritzei, Modim. The Kohanim approach. He says: Modim and the Kohanim perform Birchas Kohanim. Then those congregated recite the Bracha: Asher Kidishanu . . . Ligmor Es Ha'Hallel. They recite the complete Hallel. They end with the Bracha of V'YeHalilucha and the prayer leader recites Kaddish Tiskabel.

רב עמרם גאון provides the following:

סידור רב עמרם גאון—וכמו כן באלה שני הימים הראשונים של פסח אומרים הלל שלם, ובששת הימים האחרים אין אומרים אלא מקצתו. וכשאומרים אותו כלו צריך לברך בא"י אמ"ה אקב"ו לגמור את ההלל ואחרי גמירתו אומרים יהללך כמו שרשמתי . . . והימים שקוראים בהם מקצתו הם ששה ימים של פסח וראשי החדשים חוץ מראש חודש תשרי, שאין קוראים בו את ההלל כלל. וראש חודש טבת שקוראים בו את ההלל השלם מפני שהוא באמצע ימי הנוכה. ואם ירצה לקרוא מקצתו יברך לקרות במקום לגמור.

Translation: Similarly, we recite the complete Hallel on the first two days of Pesach. On the other six days of Pesach, we say an abridged form of Hallel. On the days we recite the complete Hallel we open Hallel with the Bracha of Ligmor Es Ha'Hallel and end with the Bracha of V'YeHalilucha as I previously wrote . . . The days on which we recite an abridged form of Hallel are as follows: the last six days of Pesach and each Rosh Chodesh except for Rosh Chodesh Tishrei on which no chapters of Hallel are recited. On Rosh Chodesh Teves, we recite the complete Hallel since Rosh Chodesh Teves falls in the middle of Chanukah. If a person chooses to recite the abridged form of Hallel, he should begin with the Bracha of Likro Es Ha'Hallel instead of Li'Gmor Es Ha'Hallel.

Initially the same practice was followed among Ashkenazim:

מהזור ויטרי סימן רלא-ומברך ברוך אתה י-י א-להי מ"ה אקב"ו לקרוא את ההלל: ובימים שגומרים מברכין לגמור את ההלל. וכיצד מדלגין. מן לא לנו. עד י-י זכרנו. ומן אהבתי. עד מה אשיב. ולאחריו מברכין יהלוד:

Translation: He recites the Bracha: Likro Es Ha'Hallel. On the days on which we say the complete Hallel, we open Hallel with the Bracha of Ligmor Es Ha'Hallel. What do we skip? From Lo Lanu until Hashem Zicharanu. From Abarti until Mah Ashiv. We close Hallel with the Bracha of V'YeHalilucha.

When did the Ashkenazic practice change and why did it change?

ספר תשב"ץ קטן סימן רט-ומברך לעולם לקרוא את ההלל לפי שאם היה מברך לגמור והיה מחסר תיבה אחת או אפילו אות אחת היה ברכה לבטלה. מיהו נהגו העולם לברך לגמור בשעה שגומרים ההלל. ע"כ:

Translation: One should recite the Bracha of Likro Es Ha'Hallel before reciting any form of Hallel. When a person opens Hallel with the Bracha of Ligmor, he has to be careful not to omit even one word or even one letter of Hallel. If he omits one word or one letter, he causes his Bracha to be a Bracha in vain because he did not recite the complete Hallel. Despite this view, the majority recite the Bracha of Ligmor when they recite complete Hallel.

Not all of our Sages accepted this reasoning :

רא"ש מסכת ברכות פרק ב'-וי"ל דאין חילוק בין לקרות ללגמור דקריאת מגילה מברכין על מקרא מגילה ולגמור נמי הוי קריאה כמו ותיקין היו גומרים אותה עם הנץ החמה לפר"ח. ומה שנהגו לשנות פעמים לגמור פעמים לקרות כדי לרמוז לצבור מתי גומרים ומתי מדלגים.

Translation: We can suggest that the two words: Likros and Ligmor are synonymous. Before reading Megilas Esther we recite the Bracha of: Al Mikra Megila. The word Ligmor can be also defined as "read". A form of the word "Ligmor" is used to describe the fact that the righteous ones would complete their recital Kriyas Shema with sunrise. This is the way the word: "Gomrim" was explained by Rabbi Chananel. Those who switch between saying Likro and Ligmor are doing so primarily to signal that they will be either completing or omitting parts of Hallel.

The לבוש provides an additional reason why one should follow a uniform practice when reciting both forms of ההלל:

לבוש אורח חיים סימן תפח'-סעיף א'-שחרית נכנסין לבית הכנסת וקורין הזמירות של שבת כמו בשבת, ומתפללין תפלת שחרית, השליח ציבור מתחיל הא-ל בתעצומות, וכן בכל השלש רגלים שהם זכר ליציאת מצרים המורים על תעצומות עוזו ויכולתו הגדולה, ואומר יוצר אור, ישע מאושרים, אופן

1. The Tashbetz Katan (to be distinguished from the responsa of Rabbi Simeon ben Tzemah Duran, the Tashbetz) was written by Rabbi Samson ben Tzadok, a student of Rabbi Meir ben Baruch of Rothenburg (the Maharam of Rothenburg), who lived in Germany during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. This work contains 590 rulings of Rabbi Meir of Rothenburg on various subjects, and was based primarily upon what Rabbi Samson saw and heard from his teacher, although the work also contains decisions which were explicitly worded by his teacher. (Bar Ilan Digital Library)

להבין את התפלה

ראשו, זולת אהבוך נפשי, גאולה ברח דודי, ומתפללין כמו בערבית כדפי' לעיל [סי' תפז ס"א], רק במקום שלום רב אומר ברכת כהנים. וגומרין ההלל, ומברכין עליו לקרוא את ההלל, ויש אומרים שמברך לגמור את ההלל, ואומרים טעמא שאין הפרש בין לקרוא לגמור בפירוש ששניהם הוא לשון קריאה בעלמא, כמו שמצינו בגמרא [ברכות ט' ע"ב] ותיקין היו גומרים ק"ש.

Translation: In the morning of the first day of Pesach, they enter synagogue and recite Pseukei D'Zimra of Shabbos as if it were Shabbos and recite Tefilas Shacharis. The prayer leader begins with the words: Ha'Kail B'Tza'Atzumos, as he does on all holidays. Those words memorialize the Exodus from Egypt. It is our way of expressing the magnitude of G-d's strength and greatness. Then they say Yotzer Ohr and the following piyuttim: in Yotzer: Yesba M'Usharim; as part of Kedusha D'Sidra: Rosho; in Emes V'Yatziv: Abavuch Nafshei, and before the Bracha of Ga'Al Yisroel: Berach Dodi. Then they say the same Shemona Esrei as they did for Arvis the night before [see paragraph 487, subparagraph 1, below]. Instead of saying Shalom Rav, he says: Sim Shalom. They then recite the complete Hallel and open Hallel with the Bracha of Likro Es Ha'Hallel. Some say that they should recite the Bracha of Ligmor Es Ha'Hallel. They give as their reason the fact that there is no material difference between the words: Likro and Ligmor; both words mean: to read, as we find in Maseches Brachos 9b: the righteous would complete the reading of Kriyas Shema at sunrise.

אבל ג"ל כיון שאותם שמברכין לגמור מברכין כן דווקא כשגומרין ההלל ממש, וכשאומרים חצי ההלל כגון בראש חודש וחול המועד אז אומרים ג"כ לקרוא, הרי נראה מתוך מנהגם כשמברכין לגמור שרוצים לומר בלשון לגמור עד גמירא, וא"כ יש לחוש לחשש הר"מ מרוטנברג, [עי' פסקים מהדורת ירושלים סי' תסד], שאמר כשמברך לגמור אם יחסר ממנה תיבה אחת או אות אחת הוי ברכה לבטלה, הלכך מי שרוצה לברך לגמור, יברך בין בראש חודש וחול המועד בין ברגלים והנוכה, שאז יהיה פירוש לגמור לקרות, והרוצה לברך לקרות, יברך כן ג"כ בין ברגלים בין בראש חודש וחול המועד והנוכה, אבל אם ישנה לברך בראש חודש לקרות וברגלים לגמור, הרי ודאי כוונתו לשון גמירא, ואם יחסר תיבה או אות הוה ברכה לבטלה, ג"ל. וכיון שגומרין אותו אין מפסיקין בו אלא כדרך שאמרו בק"ש [ברכות יג ע"א] באמצע הפרק שואל בשלום אביו או רבו ומשיב שלום לכל אדם נכבד שנתן לו שלום, ובין הפרקים שואל בשלום אדם נכבד ומשיב שלום לכל אדם: הג"ה וע"ל סימן ס"ו סעיף א' ובסימן תכ"ב סעיף ד': ואם פסק באמצע ושהה אפילו כדי לגמור את כולו, אין צריך לחזור לראש אלא למקום שפסק:

Translation: However, it appears to me that those who recite the Bracha of Ligmor do so only when they recite the complete Hallel. When they recite the abridged form of Hallel on Rosh Chodesh and Chol Ha'Moed Pesach, they recite the Bracha of Likro. By following that practice, they signal that in saying the Bracha of Ligmor that they intend to recite every word of Hallel. If that be the case, they need to share the concerned voiced by the Maharam from Rothenberg; i.e. that they may accidentally miss a word or letter, in which case they said a Bracha in vain. I would therefore suggest that those who feel strongly that they need to recite the Bracha of Ligmor when they recite the complete Hallel, such as on the Holidays and on Chanukah, should also recite Ligmor Ha'Hallel on those occasions when they recite an abridged form of Hallel, such as on Rosh Chodesh and on Chol Ha'Moed. When they act in a consistent manner, they are conveying the message that in their practices, the words Likro and Ligmor are viewed as being synonymous. However, when they tailor their Bracha to match the content of Hallel, by saying Ligmor on Holidays and Likro on Rosh Chodesh, they are broadcasting their opinion that the word Ligmor represents a complete recital of Hallel, with no letters and no words omitted. If they then omit any letters or words, they have recited a Bracha in vain. And since their intent is recite the complete form of Hallel, they should not be interrupted except in the same way as interruptions are permitted during the recital of Kriyas Shema; i.e. between chapters they may ask about the welfare of their fathers or their teachers. If they were to stop and wait even as long as it took the congregation to finish Hallel, they do not have to start Hallel again but may continue from where they paused.

The root of the word: לקרוא appears in other forms as part of other ברכות. The multiple use of this root but in different forms posed a difficulty for some commentators:

ספר אבודרהם ברכת המצות ומשפטיהם-ומה שאנו מברכין על ההלל לקרוא את הלל ואנו מברכין על מקרא מגילה מפני שקורין את המגילה בלא הפסק אבל בקריאת ההלל מפסיקין והצבור עונים ראשי פרקים. ועוד דאמרין בפסחים (ק"ז, א) שעיקר קריאת ההלל תקנו נביאים הראשונים לקרותו על כל צרה שלא תבא על הצבור לכשינאלו נומרין את ההלל הילכך שייך בו לקרוא את ההלל שכל מצוה שאינה חובה תמיד לא שייך בו לברך על. והכלל הזה הוא בלא טעם וגם רוב התירושים הם בדוחק.

Translation: Our practice of reciting the Bracha of Likro Es Ha'Hallel before reciting Hallel is not inconsistent with our practice of reciting the Bracha of: Al Mikra Megila before reading Megilas Esther. Megilas Esther must be read without any pauses, while pauses during the recital of Hallel, are permitted. In fact, we follow the practice of having the congregation repeat the opening words of each paragraph in response to what the prayer leader has said. In addition we learned in Masechet Pesachim 117a, that Hallel was composed to be recited after G-d rescues the Jewish People from a calamity. It is therefore preferable to open Hallel with a Bracha that contains the word: Likro rather than the words: Al Mikra since the Mitzvah of Hallel does not necessarily adhere to a regular schedule. This reasoning does not appear correct to me and all the other reasons I have heard are equally troublesome.

Why was הר"מ מרוטנברג so concerned that one should not skip one word or one letter when he recites הלל? הר"מ מרוטנברג lived in the era of the חסידי אשכנז. The חסידי אשכנז mastered a method of studying the words of תפילות based on counting the number of words and the letters of the תפילות.

Notice the following comments made by the רוקח to the words in the first chapter of הלל:

פירושי סידור התפילה לרוקח [קט] סדר הלל - הללוי-ה-מן הללוי-ה עד עולם הללוי-ה יש ס' תיבות, כנגד ס' ריבוא שהיו בישראל כשיצאו, נתן להם ס' מסכתות, לכך ס' שורות יש בספר תורה, ונ' פעמים תורה כתוב בחומש וה' תורות הם עשרה, הרי ס' תורה.

Translation: The first chapter of Hallel beginning with the opening word: Halleluka and ending with the closing word Halleluka includes sixty words. That number corresponds to the six hundred thousand Jewish males that were rescued from Egypt; the fact that G-d gave the Jewish People sixty volumes of the Talmud; serves as the basis for the rule that a page of the Torah must have sixty lines and we find the word Torah mentioned fifty times in the Torah and the Torah can be divided into five Torah scrolls (Chumashim-one fifths) with each scroll consisting of two rolled scrolls for a sub total of ten. Added to the fifty times the word Torah appears in the Torah brings you to the number: sixty.

In the opinion of the חסידי אשכנז, if you leave out one word or one letter from הלל, you have upset the numerical count and your recital of הלל would be incomplete. That is why you should avoid opening הלל with the ברכה: להלל את ההלל.

2. Compare the biographies of the Rokeach and of the Maharam M'Rottenberg to see the link between the two:

Rokeach- Rabbi Elazar of Worms (the Rokeach) was born in Magentzia circa 4920 (1160 CE). He received his early Torah education from his father, Rabbi. Yehuda bar Klonimus (Ribak of Magentzia); subsequently he moved to Metz, where he studied under Rabbi Eliezer, the author of the Yereim. Later, he moved to Shpera, where he studied under his primary teacher Rabbi Yehuda bar Klonimus bar Meir, the author of Yichusei Tanaim VaAmoraim (Ribak of Shpera, apparently not related). In Shpera he was educated in the hidden Torah by his relative Rabbi Yehuda HaChassid, whom he stayed by in Regensberg for a period of time. At a certain time he settled in Worms, and established a yeshiva. Many of the Torah giants of the generation number among his students, including Rabbi Yitzchak of Vienna, author of the Or Zarua. He lost his wife and children during the Crusades, and he himself and many of his students were badly wounded. Rabbi Elazar died in Worms at the end of the fifth millenium (circa 4990 - 1230 CE), and was buried there. (Bar Ilan Digital Library)

Maharam M'Rottenberg- Rabbi Meir ben Baruch of Rothenburg was born ca. 1215 in Worms, Germany, and died in captivity in the Ansheim prison in Germany in 1293. Rabbi Meir was a leading German Tosafist, and he was considered the outstanding Ashkenazic halachic authority of his generation. Even Rashba (q.v.), who was a noted Spanish halachist, referred a query to Rabbi Meir. Maharam studied in the yeshivot of the Tosafists in Germany and France, and his outstanding mentor was Rabbi Isaac Or Zarua of Vienna. (Bar Ilan Digital Library)

SUPPLEMENT

ספר ההילוקים – כא'

The Differences Between Babylonian And Palestinian Jews³-Section 21

The book: *The Differences Between Babylonian And Palestinian Jews* was published in 1938 by Mordecai Margulies as his PHD dissertation at Hebrew University. It is an important work because it provides the background to and commentary to a list of 52 differences in custom between the Jews who resided in Babylonia and the Jews who lived in Eretz Yisroel during the period of the Talmud and the period of the Geonim. Dr. Margulies estimates that the list was compiled just before the period of the Geonim.

The Beurei Hatefila Institute has solicited volunteers to help translate this important work. Some volunteers have stepped forward but more are needed. Each contribution will be marked by a dedication. As each section is translated, it will be posted on a special page at the Beurei Hatefila Institute website: www.beureihatefila.com

Difference 21 consists of two sections. The first section deals with the practice of breaking bread over two loaves on Shabbos. The second section deals with the rules of breaking bread at the Seder.

Difference 21

The People of Babylonia require that a person break bread over two loaves when reciting the Bracha of Ha'Motzei on Shabbos because they derive from the Torah an obligation to take Lechem Mishna (two loaves). The People of Eretz Yisroel require that a person break bread over only one loaf when reciting the Bracha of Ha'Motzei on Shabbos. They are concerned that by taking two loaves the person is honoring on Shabbos an event that took place on Fridays.

Commentary: The rule of Lechem Mishna, breaking bread over two loaves when reciting the Bracha of Ha'Motzei on Shabbos, is not mentioned in either the Mishna or in any Baraisa. The rule first appears in the Babylonian Talmud, expressed by an Amora⁴, a Rabbi of that period. The rule also appears in the writings of several of the Babylonian Geonim. However, no trace of the rule can be found in any writings that were composed in Eretz Yisroel. As a practical matter, concerning the obligation to break bread over two loaves when reciting the Bracha of Ha'Motzei on Shabbos, presented in the Babylonian Talmud and absent from Eretz

3. This is the English title that the author chose for his book. The book was written in 1938 and the author himself wrote: Printed in Palestine.

4. "Rabbi Abba said: on Shabbos a person must break bread over two whole loaves. What is the reason? The Torah speaks of two loaves" Bereishis Rabbah 39b (Heigger edition: Rava said), Maseches Shabbos 117b: so was the practice among the Rabbis in Babylonia at the time of the Gemara, ibid..

Yisroel sources, the Jewish community universally follows the rule⁵ as enunciated in the Babylonian Talmud and the opinion of the People of Eretz Yisroel is never considered.

At this point it is appropriate to insert one additional Difference that was omitted from most versions of the Differences that are available to us. It is a Difference referred to by the Ravaan⁶, the Ravya⁷, the Sefer Ha'Assufos^{5a} and the Tur⁸. This Difference, although it is not included in all versions of the Differences, appears to me to be authentic and was omitted for some reason⁹; since this Difference appears in the first three of the above sources as being linked to Difference 21 and is presented as part of Difference 21, I will present it here and will designate it: Difference 21a and will attempt to explain its origins.

Difference 21a

The People of Babylonia, when the first day of Pesach falls on a Shabbos, at the Seder, place a broken piece of Matzoh between the two whole pieces¹⁰ and when the first day of Pesach falls on a weekday, they place the broken piece of Matzoh on one whole piece of Matzoh¹¹ . . . The People of Eretz Yisroel, whether the first day of Pesach falls on a Shabbos or falls on a weekday, place the broken piece of Matzoh on a whole piece of Matzoh¹² and then break bread¹³ . . .

Commentary: The practice of breaking bread on Pesach at the Seder on whole Matzos and a broken Matzoh has its source in the Babylonian Talmud¹⁴. This difference in practice that depends on whether the first day of Pesach falls on Shabbos or on a weekday, that if it falls on a Shabbos it is necessary to break bread over two whole Matzohs and one broken Matzoh and if it falls on a weekday, it is necessary to break bread over one whole and one broken Matzoh, that we find for the first time in our Difference, is also found in the Ba'Al Hilchos Gedolos¹⁵ and in the writings of the Geonim¹⁶. In both those sources the ruling matches the opinion of

5. For example: Rambam Hilchos Shabbos, chapter 30 Halacha 9; Machzor Vitry 107; the piyutt: "Om Nitzura": over two loaves we break bread on Shabbos", so too provides the Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim, 274, 1.

6. Prague Edition, 73, 74, and Ehrenreich edition page 166,

7. Part two, Section 525, page 160 and without a doubt he was influenced by the reference in the Ravan.

5a. In a collection which Gester published in the Report for the year 1892-1893 of the Judith Montefiore College, page 56.

8. Orach Chaim, Section 475.

9. It is possible that it was omitted because one could then conclude that the People of Babylonia agreed that it is not necessary to break bread over two loaves on Yom Tov, a conclusion that would run contrary to the established Halacha.

10. The text as found in the Ravan, Asufos and in the Tur reads: Ha'Shlaimos.

11. In the version found in the Ravan, we find the following additional wording: and he holds the broken piece and recites the Bracha of Ha'Motzei and the Bracha of Al Achilus Matzoh. In the Ravya and Asufos the text reads: on a weekday, the broken and whole piece and we recite two Brachos over them. In the Tur: when the first day of Pesach falls on a weekday, he takes the whole and broken pieces and he recites two Brachos over them. The version that I have included in this work is the version of the Ravan. I omitted what appeared to me to be an addition.

12. In the Ravan in error: Ha'Shlaimos.

13. In the Ravan we find the additional words: Al Ha'Perusa (over the broken piece) and in the Tur we find: and he recites the Bracha over the whole piece . . .

14. So said Rabbi Papa: all agree that on the first night of Pesach we take the broken piece of Matzoh and place it on the whole piece of Matzoh and break bread (Bereishis Rabbah 39b).

15. "When the first night of Pesach falls on Shabbos he breaks bread over two whole Matzohs and the broken piece" Hilchos Gedolos Venice Edition, Section 29, 74; also Berlin Edition, page 142 but within that paragraph we find a later addition: "our Sages explained that even when the first day of Pesach falls on a weekday, he breaks bread over two whole Matzohs like on Shabbos . . ." See Albeck, Sefer Ha'Ehkol, page 61.

16. Rav Natroni, as cited in Hilchos Pesach of the Ritz Giyat (Rabbi Yitzchok ben R. Yehuda ibn Ghayyat, born ca. 1038 in Lucena, Spain. He headed a yeshiva in Lucena, and was close to R. Shmuel Ha-Naggid and his son R. Yehosef), Volume II,

the People of Babylonia as found in our Difference. Indeed, we find several references in the writings of the Geonim to the practice of breaking bread over a whole matzoh and a broken Matzoh on the first night of Pesach¹⁷. From these sources, it is possible to conclude that when a Yom Tov falls on a weekday, it is not necessary to break bread over two loaves. However, you also notice something quite unusual: Rav Natroni who emphasizes in his Responsa that there is no difference between Yom Tov and Shabbos concerning the rule of Lechem Mishna¹⁸, himself presents the difference in practice concerning the first night of Pesach depending on whether the first night of Pesach falls on a weekday or falls on Shabbos¹⁹. So too several Geonim who require that on the night of Pesach bread be broken over a whole and a broken Matzoh emphasize that on Yom Tov it is necessary to break bread over two loaves and only because of the Torah obligation to eat “poor man’s bread”, do we reduce the requirement of the second loaf and we are satisfied with one whole and one broken piece of Matzoh²⁰.

That said, it appears to me that in the era of the Amoraim (the era of the Gemara) the requirement to break bread over two loaves was limited to Shabbos²¹. Otherwise, why distinguish between occasions when the first night of Pesach falls on a Shabbos and when it falls on a weekday. If the basis for taking only one Matzoh and one broken Matzoh when the first night of Pesach falls on a weekday is the Torah requirement of taking “poor man’s bread”, the same should have been required when the first night of Pesach falls on Shabbos²². The evidence shows that it was only during the middle period of the Geonim that the practice of taking two loaves on Yom Tov was instituted. Arguably, it was Rav Natroni who first issued that requirement while after his tenure, several additional Geonim²³ ratified his ruling. However, the original custom of taking one whole and one broken Matzoh on the night of Pesach that falls on a weekday remained since it was a practice that is first referred to in the Babylonian Talmud²⁴. Those who recorded the older Halachic rules including the rule that on Yom Tov it is not necessary to break bread over two loaves, continued the practice of distinguishing between occasions when the first night of Pesach falls on a weekday and when it falls on Shabbos which they later justified by referring to the requirement that we must take: “poor man’s bread.”

And so we can trace the development of the Halacha that requires that breaking bread be

pages 102-103; Rav Kohain Tzedek is quoted there as well, page 103 and others.

17. Sha’arei Teshuva 222 and 287; Geonica Vol. II, page 185. See Sefer Ha’Eshkol, Albeck edition, page 62, and Ritz Giyat Volume II, page 103.

18. Seder Rav Amrom Gaon, page 26, side 2 and continuing in Section 2, page 19, sides 1 and 2; Chilufei Nuschaos, Paragraph 66; Shaarei Teshuva, paragraph 186; Hilchos Pesukos, paragraph 154; Ha’Pardes, page 39, side 1; Or Zerua Section 1, Paragraph 157; Siddur Rashi page 246 and others.

19. In Hilchos Pesachim of the Ritz Giyat, Volume 2, page 102 and 103.

20. Rav Shereira Gaon, Responsa, paragraph 222: “The accepted Halacha in all areas is that one must break bread on Shabbos and on Yom Tov over two loaves and on the night of Pesach on one whole loaf and one half loaf. Those two pieces are deemed to represent two loaves. It is done in this manner to represent the fact that we are holding a piece of “poor man’s bread.”

21. See the sources included in Difference 21 that refer to Shabbos only and do not refer to Yom Tov at all.

22. But see Albeck, Sefer Ha’Eshkol, page 60.

23. Rav Amrom Gaon in his Siddur, page 40 side 2, and continuing in Volume 2, page 112, side 1; Rav Shereira Gaon in his Responsa, paragraph 222 and others.

24. Bereishis Rabbah 39b.

performed over two loaves. In the era of the Tana'im (the Mishna), breaking bread over two loaves was neither required on Shabbos nor on Yom Tov. That practice remained the custom of the Jews of Eretz Yisroel. In the era of the Amoraim (the Gemara), breaking bread over two loaves was required for Shabbos but not for Yom Tov. That remained the custom of the people of Babylonia until the middle of the period of the Geonim. Beginning with the middle of the period of the Geonim, the Jews of Babylonia began to follow the practice of breaking bread over two loaves on Yom Tov as well. Despite that change, the practice of breaking bread on the first night of Pesach which fell on a weekday over one whole Matzo and one broken Matzoh remained throughout the period of the Geonim, even though an opposing opinion which required that even on the first night of Pesach that fell on a weekday, a person was required to break bread over two whole and one broken piece of Matzoh²⁵ began to be expressed. Concerning the practice of the Jews of Eretz Yisroel, we cannot locate any sources²⁶.

Even among Poskim (Halachic decisors) we find those who follow in the footsteps of the Geonim who require that when the first night of Pesach falls on a weekday, a person should break bread over one whole and one broken Matzoh²⁷. Compare those opinions to the many French and Ashkenazic Poskim who require that a person break bread over three whole Matzos²⁸, a requirement that has no foundation in any early sources and is contrary to the Eretz Yisroel tradition, which provided that it is sufficient to break bread over one whole and one broken Matzoh even when the first day of Pesach falls on Shabbos. It is surprising that concerning this practice, Ashkenazim align themselves with the practice of the Babylonian Jews²⁹.

25. Rav Amrom Gaon in his Siddur, page 39, side 1, and continuing in Volume 2, page 107, side 2; on page 40, side 2 and continuing in Volume 2, page 112, side 1.

26. Or Zarua, Volume 2, page 252 indeed presents: "the Jerusalem Talmud in the chapter that begins: Arvei Pesachim: we learn: how do we perform the Bracha over Matzoh? We place the whole piece over a broken piece . . ." Apparently, this is the source for the practice of the Jews from Eretz Yisroel (just as Ginsberg argues in his "Collection of Responsa and Notes" that he included at the end of the Sefer Ravan); see also Albeck in Sefer Eshkol, page 60. But in my opinion, the reference in the Or Zarua is not to an excerpt from the Jerusalem Talmud but is a reference to a Teshuva of Rabbana Moshe, head of the Yeshiva in Eretz Yisroel which is quoted in Seder Rav Amrom Gaon 39, side 1, and continuing in Volume 2, page 107, sides 1 and 2, (See Epstein in Tarbitz, First Annual, Volume 2, page 5, note 4). Although the Rokeach refers to it on page 283 in the name of the Jerusalem Talmud, he himself admits that he did not find it in the version of the Jerusalem Talmud that was available to him. All others such as the Tur, Orach Chaim 475, were caused to make the same error by the Or Zarua and others. In addition, Miller makes the same error in his comments to this Difference by citing the the Jerusalem Talmud as the source for this Difference.

27. Rif to Arvei Pesachim: Rabbi Chananel in his comments to Brachos Daf 39b: It is cited by the Machzor Vitry page 279; the Rambam Hilchos Chametz Oo'Matzah Chapter 8, Halacha 6.

28. Semak, Venice edition, page 118, side 2: "It is the custom in the community that the Mitzvah of Matzoh is performed by taking three equally shaped pieces of Matzoh"; KolBo, Paragraph 50, refers not only to taking three whole pieces of Matzoh but also to taking one whole and one broken piece of matzoh; Machzor Vitry, page 279, refers to the fact that Rav Yosef Tov Elem composed the following line in a liturgical poem: "Let him break one of the three Matzos". So too we find in the Siddur of Rashi and so wrote Ha'Rav Mishulem; Ha'Ghos Maimonides to the Rambam, Hilchos Chametz Oo'Matzoh, chapter 8, Halacha 6; Ravya 565; Ramah to Orach Chaim. 476, paragraph 7.

29. Machzor Vitry, page 279: "It is the custom in the community to take three Matzos because they need to break one Matzoh. Two whole pieces will then be left to serve what we need to honor the Yom Tov. That is the way most people conduct their Seder and that is what I found in the Teshuvos of the Geonim. They wrote: It is necessary to hold the two whole pieces and the broken piece. See also the Sefer Haminhagim to Rabbi Elazar Klausner, Tirnet Edition, from page 36 forward in the matter of the three Matzos. He concludes: "it is a practice that has been passed down to us, Rabbi from the mouth of his Rabbi and so we find in the customs of the People of Babylonia. See the additions and corrections to the Ravaya Volume 2, page 159, page 86.