HAGGADAH OF THE WAR
FOR THE DAY OF PESACH*
composed by Nissim Shem-Tov Eli.
Constantinople, Sosyeta anonima de Papeteria i de Imprimiria, 1919

Preface

I had this little book printed for two purposes; one is to inculcate in the mind of every person who reads this book the suffering suffered by our brothers in this cursed war, so that even those who had the good fortune of not suffering, would get a strong impression from reading and will empathize with their brothers; this will be the only consolation for the man returning from so much suffering.

My second purpose was the wish to say that the time has come for the prophecy of the prophet Isaiah to be fulfilled: "Can the prey be taken from the mighty, or the captives of a tyrant be rescued?

But thus says the Lord: Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken, and the prey of the tyrant be rescued; for I will contend with those who contend with you, and I will save your children." [Isaiah 49:24-25].

This means: you, Jewish people, think that it is impossible that booty could be taken from the hand of the victor or that he who was taken captive could be redeemed.

Thus said the Divinity: "A time will come in which he who was captured by the hand of the victor will be taken and that which was the prey of the victor will be redeemed, and the battle

that you must fight, I will fight, and your sons I will save, not like some other nation which, because it wanted to rely on its own strength, caused itself so much killing."

And I called this book *Haggadah* because it could be said that this story is like that of Egypt which we are obliged to remember every day and to read the night of Pesach, and to bless God who brought us out of slavery. It could be said that this story lacks nothing of that one, therefore every man reading this story and finding himself in his house with his wife and children should raise his eyes and say, "Bless Him for making for us this day."

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At length, we went forth from oppression, like this bread of affliction\(^1\) [made] from the fava flour\(^2\) that we ate in Egypt.

Everyone who remained alive should live happily, he who lost relatives, should be happy with those he still has.

This year here-- the year to come in the Land of Israel, this year here, reposed--the year to come in the Land of Israel with dominion.

How was this war different from all the other wars?

In all the other wars, we were not emperiled, not even a soul, and in this war, many souls [were].
In all the other wars, we ate bread without vouchers, and in this war, everything with vouchers.\(^3\)
In all the other wars, we ate all things, and in this war, just bulgur with water.
In all the other wars, some of us ate and drank with sadness and some with joy, and in this war, all of us with sadness.

We were slaves to Enver\(^4\) in Turkey, and our God saved us from under his power with His goodness and mercy, and if the holy God, blessed be He, had not saved us and our sons from oppression, we and our brothers and sons would still be soldiers to Enver in Turkey, and [so would be] even all our scholars, all our jurists, and all our learned men.

It is our obligation to recount the exodus from this oppression, and all who know the story of this war and recount it are worthy of high praise.

This came to pass with

monsieur Benveniste,\(^5\) and

monsieur Salvator,\(^6\) and

monsieur Eleazar de Azaria,\(^7\) and monsieur Bibas,\(^8\) and

monsieur Kalphon,\(^9\) who were accustomed to sleeping on down pillows and came to sleep on feathers of wet straw in a stable in the mountains.

Upon return, they were recounting the exodus from this hardship all night long until their relatives came and said to them: “Dear young men, the time has come for you to sleep until the morning in your houses without arising for the guard duty.”

Monsieur Eleazar de Azaria said: “Although I am a young man, from much suffering, I surely appear to be seventy years old, and I did not have the fortune of being allowed exodus from this hardship or this war not happening. But a certain newspaper explained: 'This war was necessary, so that you would remember the exodus from this kind of hardship all the days of your life.' ..."
Blessed is the victor, blessed is he, blessed is he who freed the people and the soldiers, blessed is he.

The English won to solve the problems of four peoples: One Hebrew, one Greek, one Armenian, and one who did not know how to behave.

The Hebrew, what does he say? “What are these oppressions of so many years of suffering brought by our God and this war?”

And you tell him like the story of Pesach: “You shall not suffer more after this war of soldiers.”

The Greek, what does he say? “Why should I do military service for you, the German, and not for myself?”

And you should thank Venizelos\textsuperscript{10} who, by sending his people to fight, saved his homeland. And you shall say to him [the Greek], “The English did the same for me in leading me out from oppression, and if the victor had been the German I would not have been redeemed.”

The Armenian, what does he say? “What is this?” And you will say to him: “With force and with power, the English sent you forth from oppression, and they enriched you and they made for you a dominion.”\textsuperscript{11}

And to the one who does not know how to behave you will explain that thus says the Newspaper: “And you should soon warn the Turk saying: ‘For the cruelties that you committed, I will bring forth those who suffer from the power of Turkey.’”
In the beginning, our fathers were servants to the Spaniard, but then the Muslim brought us to his lands, for thus says the Ottoman Chronicle: “Thus said the Sultan, King of Turkey, 'You shall not stay in Spain. Some of you were always Ashkenazi and some Sephardi, and you served other kings.'”

And he took us, the Sephardim, from Spain, and he brought us to the whole land of Turkey, and the nation grew, and he gave it Edirne, and he also gave it Salonica, and he gave it the land of Istanbul as an inheritance, and in the end, all Sephardim descended to Turkey.

Blessed is he who freed the people and the soldiers, blessed be he. For Americans and the English put an end and annulled all that which the German said to the Turk in the alliance, in a banquet of treaties. Thus said the newspaper: “And the German said, 'You shall know that your people will be sold to me in a land that is not theirs, and you will make them serve, and you will hold them for several years, and also the people who flee I will judge, and thus later we shall go forth with great possessions.'”

Go forth and read what Spain and another place sought to do to our fathers: Enver sentenced only the males to this, and Spain sought to eradicate us as a people, for thus say the books: “Spain wanted to eradicate my people and they burned many of their books, and they [the people] suffered from the Inquisition, and they descended to Turkey as foreigners, and they became a very rich people important in the empire.”

It is the intelligence that sustained our fathers and us, for there was not just one who rose over us to destroy us, but in every cycle and century they rose over us to
destroy us, but the Holy God rescued us from their hands.

And they descended to Turkey, forced by the order of the Spaniard, and they resided here, not with the intention of fleeing again, but rather of staying, and they told King Bayazid: “We came to stay in the land, your servants, upon whom the Inquisition bore down in the land of Spain and who now are your servants in the land of Turkey. We will not leave for another land.”

Being poor, as one can understand, through fields and by roads, our fathers descended to Turkey, and now our God has made us a nation of many wealthy and prominent people.

And there it became [known] as a great people, that is to say, there were men famous for their wisdom and wealth, as we see. And the sons of Israel struggled, and traveled, and became prominent and enriched themselves very much, and the land became filled with them.

And when they became prominent, there were some who were envious, as is known, saying: “These Jews thrive like the herbs of the field, and they grew numerous, and they became prominent, and they decorate themselves with ornaments [?], [their sons [are] directors and their daughters [are] educated, these who were naked and defenseless.”

And the new Muslims did evil to us, and they oppressed us, and they forced us to do hard labor.

And the new Muslims did evil to us, as said the German: “Come, let us outsmart him, so that he does not rebel, lest, if the war continues, he unites with our enemies and fights against us and expels us from the land.”

And they oppressed us, like the German said, and
they put over us corporals and sergeants in order to oppress with their labors, and they made us
demolish the old streets of Edirne and Silivri. And they forced us to do hard labor, like the
German said, and they made us serve in the labor battalion with much suffering.\textsuperscript{18}

And we called to the God of our fathers, and God heard our voice and he saw our affliction and
our labor and our suffering.

And we called to the God of our fathers what our hearts felt, and it was in those dark days when
Sultan Reshad, the King of Turkey,\textsuperscript{19} died-- and the sons of Israel sighed from much suffering,
and they cried out, and their exclamations rose to the God of suffering.

And God heard our voice like a compassionate father, and God heard our groans
and God remembered His promise to do to us goodness
that He promised Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

... And the Entente brought us forth from oppression with a hand of compassion, and with an arm of
humanity, and with great wisdom, and with airplanes signaling the intention of entering Turkey.

And the Entente brought us forth from oppression, not with war, and not with tanks, and
not with shooting, but with a single general\textsuperscript{20} with his honor and with his men, that such was the
condition: “And I will pass over the land of Turkey after the Armistice,\textsuperscript{21} and I will wreak
vengeance upon every evildoer in the land of Turkey, upon those who did acts of beasts, and all
the rulers of Turkey, I, the Entente, will bring to judgement.
And I will pass over the land of Turkey without war, and I will wreak vengeance upon every evil doer without many speeches, and all the leaders of Turkey I will judge without there being a revolution, I, the Entente, and no other.

[I will do this] with a hand of mercy, in contrast to the cruelty ordered by Enver Pasha:

“The hand of the government will control that which every person possesses, in order to take from some the horses, from some the donkeys, from some the wagons, from some the cows, from some the lambs, from some cloths, from some the money”\(^{22}\)--a heavy cruelty indeed.

And with an arm of humanity, it [the cruelty] was removed from Palestine, for thus said the Entente: “Enough of all these years of other governments spreading their hand over Jerusalem.”

...

And it [the Entente] entered Turkey because a lot of blood had been spilled unnecessarily, solely at the pleasure of Enver, some burned in fire, some in blood, and some suffocated in smoke.

Another vengeance for Enver and for Talat,\(^ {23}\) particularly for these two: with an arm of cruelty to these two and with an extraordinary death for these two, so that the death of these two stays as a sign, and so that the people sees miracles in these two.

These are the ten plagues that the war brought over the residents of Turkey, and they are: Bloodshed, rage, lice, mixing of people, mortality of youths, mange, a hail of bombs, fear, darkness because there was no gas, killing of great men.
Chelebi Juda, in his old age, said: “I have never seen anyone who did evil to a Jew end well.”

Joseph of Balat said: “You say that the residents of Turkey suffered ten plagues, and I say that he who was in the army suffered fifty plagues.”

... How many marvels did the victor bring upon us?

If he had brought us out from the power of Talat and Enver and had not decreed vengeance upon them, it would have been enough for us.

If he had decreed vengeance upon them and had not done the same to the evildoers, it would have been enough for us.

If he had done the same to the evildoers and had not wreaked vengeance on the leaders, it would have been enough for us.

If he had wreaked vengeance on the leaders and had not taken their property, it would have been enough for us.

If he had taken their property and had not opened the ports to us, it would have been enough for us.

If he had opened the ports for us and had not caused ships to enter them, it would have been enough for us.

If he had caused ships to enter them and had not sunk our tormentors in them, it would have been enough for us.

If he had sunk our tormentors in it and had not lowered the prices of many things, it would have been enough for us.
If he had lowered the prices of many things and had not brought us flour from America, it would have been enough for us.

If he had brought us flour from America and had not freed us, it would have been enough for us.

If he had liberated us and had not shown to us, to every nation, its place,\textsuperscript{26} it would have been enough for us.

If he had shown to us, to every nation, its place and had not sent every one to his house, it would have been enough for us.

If he had sent every one to his house and had not made us masters of Eretz Israel it would have been enough for us.

If he had made us masters of Eretz Israel and had not permitted us to form a chamber,\textsuperscript{27} it would have been enough for us.

These many marvels came from the Victor upon us: he removed us from the power of Enver and Talat, he wreaked vengeance upon them, he wreaked vengeance upon the evildoers, he imprisoned the leaders, he took their property, he opened the ports, he caused ships to enter them, he sunk our tormentors in the sea, he lowered the prices of many things, he brought us flour from America, he gave us freedom, he showed us—every nation—our place, he made everyone return to his house, he made us masters of \textit{Eretz Israel}, he permitted us to form a chamber to govern the nation.

....
"salimos de apreto komo este pan" is a play on words. Literally, it means, "we got from under the press like this [flat] bread."

2 Fava bean flour is sometimes used to make flatbread.

3 There were periods during World War I when there was food rationing in the Ottoman Empire.

4 Enver Pasha (1881-1922) was Ottoman Minister of War during World War I and the most powerful member of the government. In 1918, he fled the country.

5 This is a reference to r. Haim Benveniste (1603–1673), the author of influential halakhic works, who served as a rabbi in Tita and Izmir. Sabbetay Zevi appointed him chief rabbi of Izmir, but r. Benveniste soon returned to orthodoxy. Here, he represents r. Eliezer ben Hyrcanus.

6 I was unable to identify this rabbi, but, if this name is a play on words ("salvador" being "savior"), he represents r. Yoshua (Jesus), which is confirmed by the order in which the rabbis appear in the text. R. Eliezer and r. Yoshua were close friends, but the former supported a war with Rome, while the latter opposed this idea.

7 In the story of the Bnei Barak seder, Eleazar ben Azariah is the youngest of the five rabbis, but he makes it clear that he has aged prematurely. In fact, as in this Haggadah, he is the only one who speaks in the story.

8 A reference to r. Judah Bibas (1776-1852), an influential Sephardi rabbi considered a forerunner of Zionism. He stands for r. Akiba.
R. Moshe Kalphon Hacohen (1874-1950), one of the leading rabbis of the island of Djerba (Tunisia), was a Zionist. He stands for r. Tarfon who was Akiba's teacher. Here, as in the previous case, the association between the names is phonetic.

Eleftherios Venizelos (1864-1936), Greek Prime Minister during World War I. Although King Constantine favored the Central Powers, as a result of Venizelos' political victory, Greece entered the war on the Allies' side (June 1917).

A reference to the First Armenian Republic (1918-1920). However, despite Lloyd George's promise to which the author is referring, Britain did not provide much assistance to Armenia.

The Ottoman sultan Bayazid II (r. 1481-1512) during whose reign most Iberian exiles settled in the empire. Sephardim used to believe (and some still do) that he actually invited them to his lands.

In the sixteenth century, these Ottoman cities had the largest Judeo-Spanish communities.

The secret Ottoman-German Treaty concluded on August 2, 1914. Enver Passha was among the signatories.

Cf. Gen 15:13-14: "Then the LORD said to Abram, "Know this for certain, that your offspring shall be aliens in a land that is not theirs, and shall be slaves there, and they shall be oppressed for four hundred years; but I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions."

I.e. Portugal. Otro lugar is an imperfect anagram of Portugal.

I.e. Young Turks, who came to power as a result of the 1908 revolution.

In the Ottoman Empire, prior to 1909, Jews and Christians were exempt from military service. The Young Turk government made conscription mandatory for all Ottomans. During World War
I, however, most non-Muslims were used in labor battalions, although many served in the regular army.

19 Sultan Reshad (Mehmet V) (r.1909--1918).

20 A reference to Field Marshal Edmund Allenby (1861-1936) who defeated the Ottomans in Palestine and captured Jerusalem (December 9, 1917).

21 The Armistice of Mudros between Turkey and the Allied Powers signed on October 30, 1918, marked the surrender of the Ottoman Empire. Further in the text, the author refers to some of its conditions, such as opening of Dardanelles and Bosphorus; Allied occupation of Dardanelles, and Bosphorus forts; surrender of all war vessels in Turkish waters; and the right of the Allies to occupy any strategic points if necessary.

22 By the end of the war, running out of supplies, the Ottomans began to requisition the property of their subjects.

23 Talat Pasha (1874-1921), Ottoman Minister of Finances, Minister of the Interior, and Grand Vizier (1917-1918). In 1918, he fled the country and in 1921 was assassinated by a survivor of the Armenian genocide initiated by him.

24 Most likely, a reference to Judah bar Ilay (mentioned in the Talmud only by his first name), who could not bear saying all the ten plagues and invented a mnemonic. "Chelebi" is a honorific, equivalent of "gentleman,"

25 A reference to a Rabbi from Balat (a district of Istanbul), whom I was unable to identify. He represents r. Jose of Galilee (Jose ha-Glili) who wanted to prove that there were more than ten plagues and that they were worse than they seem to be. He was a supporter of the revolt against Rome.
A reference to the national self-determination as a principle adopted at the Versailles Treaty in June 1919, but discussed in preparation for it. Hence, Eli would have known about this notion, even if this *Haggadah* was indeed produced for 1919 Passover.

A reference to the Balfour Declaration (November 2, 1917) which endorsed the creation of a Jewish home in Palestine.