

Le **Hallel** (« Hallel égyptien » ou « Petit Hallel ») consiste en 6 psaumes (113-118 TM, 112-117 LXX).

1° Louange au nom du Seigneur,

Psaumes 113, 114, 115

2° Chant pour le sacrifice d'action de grâce :

Psaume 116 (115)

3° Chant de ceux qui montent vers la Maison du Seigneur :

Psaumes 117 et 118

Ces textes sont généralement entonnés à haute voix par toute la communauté

lors de l'office du matin, (à l'issue de la 'Amidah),

à l'occasion des trois *fêtes de pèlerinage*

(Pessah (la Pâque), Shabouoth (Pentecôte) et Soukkoth (les Tentés),

ainsi que pour Hanoukka (la Dédicace) et le premier jour de chaque mois (Rosh Hodesh).

Le Hallel est aussi prononcé le premier soir de Pessah,

à la fin du repas du *Seder*, avant de boire la quatrième coupe.

Hallel Shalem ou complet

Le Hallel *complet* (ou הלל שלם - *Hallel Shalem*) consiste en la lecture intégrale des 6 psaumes,

- lors des 9 jours de Soukkoth,
- lors de Shabouoth,
- lors des deux premiers jours de Pessah, (la Pâque)
- lors de Hanoukka.

'Hatzi Hallel ou Demi-Hallel

Le demi-Hallel (ou חצי הלל - '*hatzi Hallel*) est tronqué

- des versets 1-11 du psaume 115

- et de tout le psaume 116.

Cette forme du Hallel est lue :

- Lors des six derniers jours de Pessah (car la rédemption ne fut que partielle)
Le Midrash rapporte que lorsque les Égyptiens se sont noyés, les anges du ciel ont voulu chanter, mais Dieu leur a dit : « Mes créatures se noient et vous voulez chanter ! »
- À Rosh Hodesh (car le Hallel n'y fut introduit que bien après son ajout aux fêtes principales).

Grand Hallel

C'est ainsi qu'on appelle le **Psaume 136**,

chanté traditionnellement à la fin du repas pascal juif, après le « petit Hallel ».

Cependant, le *Talmud* inclut aussi sous cette dénomination les Psaumes **120 à 135**.

NB Les manuscrits de Qmrân portent une version légèrement différente du Ps. 136.

« **Hallel final** » (*Hallel grec* ou *troisième Hallel*)

On désigne par ces noms les psaumes 145 à 150, récités le matin.

À la fin du Seder, après la récitation du Hallel habituel qui est nommé "Hallel Égyptien", à la fin du Psaume CXVIII, on dit la bénédiction "qui crée le fruit de la vigne" et on boit la Quatrième Coupe.

On emplit immédiatement la Cinquième Coupe et l'on récite en son honneur le Grand Hallel (Psaume cxxxvi), depuis "Remerciez l'Éternel il est bon" jusqu'à la fin des vingt-six remerciements qui s'achèvent par les mots "Car sa bonté dure autant que monde".

On récite ensuite la louange "Que l'âme de tout vivant..." jusqu'à la fin.

On répète la Bénédiction "Qui crée le fruit de la vigne", on boit la Cinquième Coupe et l'on termine le Récit.

Le *Séder* se terminait par la fin du *Hallel* (le début a été lu avant le repas), puis le grand *Hallel* (Psaume 136 suivi de *Nishmath* ainsi que la troisième coupe) jusqu'à *Mélech El 'Hé Haolamim*.

Après la quatrième coupe, on disait la "*birkhath e'had me'ein sheva*" - la dernière bénédiction après avoir bu le vin).

The Talmud (*Pesachim* 118a) explains that the Hallel mentions five topics of redemption: the exodus from Egypt, the crossing of the Red Sea, the giving of the Torah, the resurrection of the dead, and the birthpangs of the final redemption. The Talmud proceeds to explain where in the Hallel each of these topics is mentioned—explicitly or via allusion.

The exodus from Egypt, the crossing of the sea, and the giving of the Torah are all mentioned in the first two chapters of the Hallel. At the Seder, after reciting these two chapters, we say the Asher Ge'alanu ("who has redeemed us") blessing, and we eat the matzah—both of which commemorate the miracles and redemptions of the past.

The following chapters of the Hallel mention the miracles which will happen in the future, with the coming of Moshiach—a topic of their own, worthy of being discussed separately. They are appropriately recited towards the end of the Seder, when we have just greeted Elijah the prophet, who will herald the coming of Moshiach, and when we focus on our anticipation of, yearning for and belief in the messianic redemption.

There is a debate among the early authorities whether Hallel is Biblically or Rabbinically mandated. The Behag, the Ibn Ezra, the Semak, Rabbeinu Meyuchos, Rabbi Daniel HaBavli, and the Zohar Harakiah, all hold that Hallel is one of the 613 Commandments of the Torah. The Rambam holds that Hallel is rabbinically mandated.

Personalized Hallel:

The Ibn Ezra derives the Biblical law of Hallel from: "He is your praise and He is your Lord, Who did for you these great and awesome things that your eyes saw ." The Ibn Ezra understands the phrase "He is your praise" as an obligation to make God the focus of our praise, or Hallel. He goes further and says that since the verse concludes with "Who did for you these great and awesome things" that the obligation to sing Hallel is whenever God does great and awesome things for us.

The context of "these great and awesome things" is the description of all that God did for us as individuals during our forty years in the desert. God fed us the Manna, which was provided for each individual. The Manna tasted the way each person imagined it. God provided us with water, shelter and clothing.

The Ibn Ezra understands that Hallel is a response to the individual things that God does for us. It is not a response to the super miracles performed for the entire nation, but to the feeling that God takes care of us as individuals. The specific kindnesses God grants us obligate us to sing His praises.

Hallel and Time:

Rabbeinu Meyuchos agrees with the Ibn Ezra that the obligation to sing Hallel is Biblical. However, he derives the obligation from a different verse: "And this day will be for you a remembrance and you shall celebrate it as a Day of Celebration to God for all generations, this a statute forever that you shall celebrate this day." (Exodus 12:14) This verse is telling us that whenever we have a day of celebration we should praise God, and the best way to praise God is with the Hallel. He then brings another verse, "You will sing as you do in the evening when you are celebrating a festival. You will be happy like one who plays a flute as he goes to the mountain of the Lord, the Rock who shelters Israel." (Isaiah 30:29) You will sing on this day because it is a day of celebration. This indicates that you should sing Hallel whenever you have a day of celebration.

In fact the Talmud derives from this verse that you must sing whenever you have a day of celebration.

Rabbeinu Meyuchos does not understand Hallel as an individual expression of praise but as related to time.

The Talmud teaches that there is actually a better Hallel than our Hallel! The title of this other Psalm of Hallel is Hallel Hagadol – The Great Hallel. The Talmud asks why we sing our Hallel when we have the Great Hallel. Rabbi Yochanan answers that our Hallel mentions five miracles that are not all included in Hallel Hagadol: 1) The Exodus, 2) The Splitting of the Sea, 3) Revelation, 4) The Resurrection of the Dead, and 5) The birth pangs of the Messiah.

The Maharal is bothered by Rabbi Yochanan's answer: Hallel Hagadol contains many other miracles. Why does the mention of these five mean that we should sing our Hallel rather than the Great Hallel?

The Maharal answers that the number five has great significance. The number is represented by the Hebrew letter "Hay" which was the letter God used to create this world. One of the reasons that He used the letter "Hay" is that it is a purely spiritual letter. We use only our breath to express it. We do not use our lips, tongue, palate or teeth. The five miracles correspond to the letter "Hay". Each one of these five things was not a natural part of creation, but above the physical. They were spiritual experiences.

Two of the miracles happened in the beginning: the exodus and the splitting of the sea. The final two, the resurrection and the Messiah are at the end of time. The middle miracle, the Revelation, bridges all time. The Five miracles take us from the beginning of Israel to the end. The idea of the Hallel is time. The entire history of human existence is covered by Hallel.

Hallel represents the idea of being able to bridge across all time. Hallel speaks of a sense of destiny. There are certain times when something can happen to somebody that can actually be a point in which all the pieces of a puzzle fit together. Everything I experienced up to this point begins to make sense. I couldn't understand earlier why all these things were happening to me, but now, I understand why they happened and how I benefited from them. You realize that you have a sense of destiny. That is the moment at which you sing Hallel.

Not only is that the moment when you sing Hallel, but you must sing Hallel with that sense of destiny. We must sing with an appreciation of how our lives have been a series of events that have pushed us to grow to this point. Hallel has to be an expression of my conviction or feeling of security that even while I sing about all the wonderful things God has done for me and the Jewish people, and even as I wonder about all the challenges I have faced and continue to confront, I believe that there is a sense of destiny. I can taste that everything will fit together at one point. Hallel is an expression of what I will feel when I am blessed with that moment of clarity when all will make sense.

Hallel is a result of my understanding that there is a plan and there is a Guide Who has a plan and eventually all will be clear and everything will fit together. If a person is fortunate enough to experience a moment in which many pieces of his life fit together, he should use that experience when singing Hallel. Someone has been taking care of me all along and has brought me to this point.