

“עגת מצות כי לא חמץ”

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We are familiar with the following *posuk* from this week’s *parsha*, as we recite it in the Hagada every Pesach Seder: “ויפו את-הבצק אשר הוציאו ממצרים עגת מצות כי לא חמץ כי-גרשו ממצרים ולא יכלו להתמהמה וגם-צדה (שמות יב, לט) לא-עשו להם” (שמות יב, לט). Bnei Yisroel did not have time to fully bake their bread when they left Mitzrayim, so it came out as *matzah*-cakes. In the Hagada, we say this *posuk* in the context of Rabban Gamliel’s famous *ma’amer* (found in ה' י' פסחים י') that one must speak about מצה ומרור to fulfill his *chiyuv* of recalling *Yetziyas Mitzrayim*. Rabban Gamliel explains the reason we eat matzah is because the Ribono Shel Olam took us out of Mitzrayim so fast that our dough had not enough time to rise and yielded only matzah instead of bread.

If you were to ask the average person why we eat matzah on Pesach, many people would say to commemorate the matzah we ate in Mitzrayim as slaves. They would not be incorrect, because we say as much right at the beginning of the Hagada: “...הא לחמא עניא די אכלו אבהתנא בארעא דמצרים...”. Yet, Rabban Gamliel tells us that this is not the rationale for eating matzah, rather we eat it to symbolize the haste in which we departed Mitzrayim.

If you were to ask another man on the street, which reason would seem to be more pertinent for eating matzah at the Seder? Probably, he would say that commemorating the bread of affliction we ate for over 200 years is more significant to *Leil HaSeder* than the seemingly innocuous detail of our bread not rising when packing up and rushing out the door. Why then, is the rationale for the מצות עשה דאורייתא of eating matzah this ‘end-note’ detail?

What is also curious, perhaps, is that the *posuk* tells us they did not prepare provisions to take with them for departure. Moshe Rabbeinu had given them ample warning that they would be leaving Mitzrayim after eating the *Korban Pesach* and *Makas Bechoros*. It would only seem logical that everyone would prepare to go out to the *Midbar*. Why were they not prepared to go?

Perhaps we can answer both questions *חדא בחברתא* - one with another. This is conjecture on my part, but I assume when Moshe Rabbeinu told Bnei Yisroel before *Makas Dam* that it would happen and Pharaoh would surrender and send them out, they prepared to go. But then he did not let them go, and this happened eight more times with the subsequent *makkos*. At that point, perhaps they were a little pessimistic of actually leaving Mitzrayim. By *Makas Bechoros*, perhaps they did not prepare food for departure because they simply did not believe they would be leaving.

Maybe this is also the reason that the bread that didn’t rise is the more significant reason for us to eat matzah. The lesson of the matzah is not simply to remember what the food was like while we were slaves, but it is to remind us how Hashem dealt with us in taking us out of Mitzrayim, and how He will deal with us in taking us out of this *galus* as well, במהרה בימנו בקרוב ממש. And that is that it happens in an instant. Chazal tell us, “ישועת ה' כהרף עין”. A person on an individual level, or Bnei Yisroel on a national level, could be so forlorn and sunken in the depths of despair, yet Hashem can save him (them) in the blink of an eye. This is what the Torah wants us to remember and believe for generations to come- *yeshuos* come from Hashem instantaneously. This is an important lesson for us all for the present and future, not just a commemoration of the past.

The truth of the matter is, the Sforno says this idea in *Parshas Mikeitz* concerning Yosef being taken out of the dungeons. The *posuk* says the phrase (בראשית מא, יד) “...ויריצהו מן-הבור...” – they yanked Yosef out of the dungeon and gave him a quick shave and haircut and fresh clothes to appear before Pharaoh. The Sforno comments that this was a harbinger of what would happen at *Yetziyas Mitzrayim*- we would be rushed out then as well. Helpless and hopeless after so many years, and Hashem saved both Yosef and Bnei Yisroel עין כהרף עין.

The Navi tells us that this is also how it will be in the גאולה העתידה. In Malachi, the last *nevua* before the era of prophecy closed, the *posuk* says, (מלאכי ג, א) "ופתאם יבוא אל-היכלו האדון אשר-אתם מבקשים" - Hashem will bring the Final *Geula* suddenly.

Many times, a person can be in a situation or going through something and think, how is this ever going to end? This could be a personal issue- sickness, *shidduchim*, difficulty raising children. The lesson we must take from Yosef in the dungeon and the Navi is that Hashem can end our difficulty in an instant.

Right now, the week of *Parshas Bo* 5781, we are not in a good *matzav*. Eretz Yisroel, besides for the coronavirus devastating so many people and the country having to be on lockdown despite their success with vaccinations, there has been a change in administration. Everyone assumes that this new administration will not be as good of a friend to the State of Israel as the outgoing one. Iran is reaching 20% capacity towards a nuclear weapon, with an open threat to Eretz Yisroel. Similarly, here in the United States it is a scary *matzav*- the incident at the Capital and people in general being at each other's throats. There seems to be more hatred between sides than during the Vietnam War. So many *Yidden* have lost their jobs and income as of late. It ain't happy times.

The lesson of the matzah, of leaving Mitzrayim so fast as to not have time to prepare food, is a lesson for all of us for *dorei doros* about how the Ribono Shel Olam brings *yeshuos* and how He will bring the גאולה העתידה, במהרה בימנו בקרוב ממש!