

הערות על ההגדה

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הא לחמא עניא די אכלו אבהתנא בארעא דמצרים. כל דכפיין ייתי וייכל, כל דצריך ייתי ויפסח. השתא הכא, לשנה הבאה בארעא דישראל. השתא עבדי, לשנה הבאה בני חורין

The vel't's קשיא on עניא די אכלו אבהתנא בארעא דמצרים is as follows: At this point of the seder we've already done ירחץ כרפס ירחץ קדש ורחץ כרפס ירחץ, so this cannot really be an invitation to join us for anyone who isn't already at the table. What are we doing then?

In our house, we learn פשוט like this: Whenever we go to someone else's house for a meal, the בעל הבית is the host and he leads everything. At the seder, this rule doesn't apply. By the seder, everyone has the חיוב לראות את עצמו כאלו הוא יצא מצרים and we all know that it is very difficult to really feel as if we ourselves, personally, left מצרים. How much more difficult is it to reach this level if we are a guest sitting at someone else's table! I'm not free to do the things that will make me feel the עבדות וחירות when I have to follow his lead and do the things he's doing. Therefore, the בעל הגדה tells the בעל הבית to talk to the people at his seder and tell them that this is the bread that our fathers ate in מצרים and everyone should sit and eat however they want. It doesn't matter that you're at my table- do whatever you need to do to feel the עבדות וחירות. If an outsider would look at this table with everyone doing their own thing, they would think it dysfunctional and totally lacking in manners and courtesy. Let's reframe it like this: If a few families went on a road trip and stopped off at a motel and took a conference room to eat, would it matter where everyone sat and how the meal was done? There is no בעל הבית there, they are all traveling. So too here, we say בארעא דישראל לשנה הבאה - we are also traveling! It doesn't matter that you are at my table, we haven't reached our destination yet. As well, השתא עבדי לשנה הבאה בני חורין - we are all עבדים equally so it's OK to be at my table and still do how you want and need to feel יציאת מצרים and fulfill the מצוות הלילה. Tonight, everyone is a בעל הבית at the seder.

מה נשתנה הלילה הזה מכל הלילות? שֶׁבְּכָל הַלַּיְלוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין חֵמֶץ וּמֶצֶה, הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה – כִּלּוֹ מֶצֶה. שֶׁבְּכָל הַלַּיְלוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין שְׂאֵר יִרְקוֹת – הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה (כִּלּוֹ) מָרוֹר. שֶׁבְּכָל הַלַּיְלוֹת אֵין אָנוּ מְטַבְּלִין אֶפְּסֵלּוֹ פֶּעַם אַחַת – הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה שְׁתֵּי פְעָמִים. שֶׁבְּכָל הַלַּיְלוֹת אָנוּ אוֹכְלִין בֵּין יוֹשְׁבֵין וּבֵין מְסֻבִּין – הַלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה כִּלְנוּ מְסֻבִּין.

In our house, we learn that the four questions are really one question. We know that Sukkos is זמן שמחתנו. Everything we do is a חלק of the שמחה and bolsters the שמחה. Shavuot is זמן מתן תורתנו, Rosh Hashanah is יום הזכרון, Yom Kippur is יום הכיפורים. What are we doing tonight? מצה represents both עבדות and חירות because

we ate it in מצרים and when we left. מרור is only the עבדות. טיבול goes both ways because it is an act of חירות but signifies the עבדות. מסבין is only חירות. We are doing things that seem to be mutually exclusive and at odds with one another, so what's going on? This is the question of מה נשתנה.

עבדים היינו לפרעה במצרים, ויוציאנו ה' אלהינו משם ביד חזקה ובזרע נטויה. ואלו לא הוציא הקדוש ברוך הוא את אבותינו ממצרים, הרי אנו ובנינו ובני בנינו משעבדים היינו לפרעה במצרים. ואפילו כלנו חכמים כלנו נבונים כלנו זקנים כלנו יודעים את התורה מצוה עלינו לספר ביציאת מצרים. וכל המרבה לספר ביציאת מצרים הרי זה משבח.

How does this answer the question? Let us try to understand the words. 'We were עבדים in מצרים and Hashem took us out.' How can we comprehend that? We are so far removed from that we cannot even fathom it. Then the paragraph continues by saying Hashem took out *our fathers*. Didn't we just say He took us out? The answer is הרי אנו ובנינו ובני בנינו משעבדים היינו לפרעה במצרים. Really our אבות were the ones taken out, not us. However, at that point all future generations would also be עבדים. Once an עבד, always an עבד. We are saying that we must appreciate this fact, that we would've have been עבדים just like our ancestors so Hashem took us also! This answers the מה נשתנה because we too have a personal connection to the חירות and need to symbolize it and talk about it and feel it. Therefore, we do the מצוות הסדר to reach that level of cognizance. The more things we can do to feel for real this dichotomy of עבדות וחירות, the better we can feel מצרים ביציאת מצרים.

We continue with "ואפילו כלנו..." because the goal for tonight is not to just say what happened in order to make sure everyone knows. The goal is for each and every one of us feel it, to feel the story personally, and therefore ביציאת מצרים. The proof is from the following story that the הגדה brings:

מעשה ברבי אליעזר ורבי יהושע ורבי אלעזר בן־עזריה ורבי עקיבא ורבי טרפון שהיו מסבין בבני־ברק והיו מספרים ביציאת מצרים כל־אותו הלילה, עד שבאו תלמידיהם ואמרו להם רבותינו הגיע זמן קריאת שמע של שחרית.

This story is about the greatest gedolim, how they stayed up the entire night to reach this level of feeling מצרים ביציאת מצרים. They knew the whole Torah, but for the seder that's not enough. This shows us that full immersion of the story, the details, are necessary to feel מצרים ביציאת מצרים, not just to merely know.

אמר רבי אלעזר בן־עזריה הרי אני כבן שבעים שנה ולא זכיתי שתאמר יציאת מצרים בלילות עד שדרשה בן זומא, שנאמר, למען תזכר את יום צאתך מארץ מצרים כל ימי חיך. ימי חיך הימים. כל ימי חיך הלילות. וחכמים אומרים ימי חיך העולם הזה. כל ימי חיך להביא לימות המשיח:

Why do we recite this Mishna from Brachos at the seder? It flows very nicely with what we just said. We are contrasting what separates seder night from every other night of the year. Every night we have an obligation of זכירת יציאת מצרים,

simply reciting it. Tonight, we have the חיוב of הוא כאלו הוא עצמו את לראות את עצמו כאלו הוא חיוב which requires a lot more than reading it.

בְּרוּךְ הַמְּקוֹם, בְּרוּךְ הוּא, בְּרוּךְ שֶׁנִּתְּן תּוֹרָה לְעַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּרוּךְ הוּא. כְּנֶגֶד אַרְבַּעַת בְּנֵי דְבָרָה תּוֹרָה: אֶחָד חֲכָם, וְאֶחָד רָשָׁע, וְאֶחָד תָּם, וְאֶחָד שְׂאִינוּ יוֹדֵעַ לְשֵׂאוֹל.

This is a very beautiful song and clearly quite meaningful, but what does it mean? Maybe we can understand with the following: The gemara says that Hashem is called מקום because He created a perfect, beautiful world and gave it a place to be. This is such a wonderful thing but it nearly takes away our בחירה חופשית. How can we do anything against Hashem's will when we are living in His universe? Therefore, we say "בְּרוּךְ הוּא" to thank Hashem for making Himself נסתר thereby making it possible for us to keep our בחירה חופשית. At this point we should be living perfectly-beautiful world AND בחירה חופשית. However, we see that from the עץ הדעת onwards that isn't so. Every דר from נח עד אדם got worse and worse! Really, Hashem could have just decided to finish everything then and there. Instead, He took the Torah that he was מברא עלמא and He tailored it to help man fix every part of his being. The תשובות and מצוות were made opposite our אברים וגידים to be מתקן them. Not only that, but He made us His nation and gave the Torah to us- "בְּרוּךְ שֶׁנִּתְּן תּוֹרָה" לְעַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל. Yet again, however, this tremendous Divine act should take away our בחירה חופשית. We say "בְּרוּךְ הוּא" once more for making Himself נסתר and giving us the opportunity to have בחירה חופשית. Then, Hashem says "not only have I given you the Torah, but I will give it in a way for all of you to understand." Not just one level of shiur, so to speak, rather four levels:

חֲכָם מָה הוּא אוֹמֵר? מָה הַעֲדוֹת וְהַחֲקִים וְהַמְּשַׁפְּטִים אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֲתָכֶם. וְאֵף אֶתָּה אֹמֵר לוֹ כִּהְלָכוֹת הַפֶּסַח: אֵין מִפְּטִירִין אַחַר הַפֶּסַח אֲפִיקוֹמָן:

None of the בנים know what's going on, but the חכם is following all the directions and partaking in all of the action. Then he asks, "What is the significance of all of this? What role does each thing play?" For him, he knows it is correct and wants to understand the depth. Therefore, we must tell him the whole story and all the halachos, as he is displaying חכמה.

רָשָׁע מָה הוּא אוֹמֵר? מָה הַעֲבוּרָה הַזֹּאת לָכֶם. לָכֶם – וְלֹא לוֹ. וְלִפִּי שְׂהוּצִיא אֶת עַצְמוֹ מִן הַכָּלל כְּפֹר בְּעֵקֶר. וְאֵף אֶתָּה הִקְהָה אֶת שְׁנֵי וְאֹמֵר לוֹ: "בְּעֵבוֹר זֶה עָשָׂה ה' לִי בְּצִאתִי מִמִּצְרָיִם." לִי וְלֹא לּוֹ. אֵלוֹ הִיָּה שָׂם, לֹא הִיָּה נִגְאָל:

In contrast, the רשע sounds condescending. On a superficial level, it seems that we are insulting him. If that's the case, we don't need to thank Hashem for teaching us how to insult the רשע- we know how to do it ourselves. It must be that Hashem is telling us how to talk to him. What the רשע is really asking is if your explanation makes sense, he'll do it also. But don't expect him to do it without a good explanation. By this he is denying נעשה ונשמע and removing himself from us.

תורת ה' means to sour his teeth- make him uncomfortable. Explain to him that his axiom of understanding before doing does not work when dealing with תורת ה'. We explain to him that if he had tried his מהלך by יציאת מצרים, he wouldn't have made it out. He would have been just like all the other nations who needed to hear the Torah before accepting it and would have precluded the possibility of being מקבל תורה. The whole purpose of יציאת מצרים was קבלת התורה and he wouldn't have left מצרים. Once he hears this, he'll be מקבל and do תשובה.

תָּם מָה הוּא אוֹמֵר? מָה זֹאת? וְאִמְרָתְךָ אֵלָיו "בְּחֻזְקֵךָ יָד הוֹצִיאָנוּ ה' מִמִּצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים."

He doesn't understand what's flying and asks a simple question. Therefore, you give him a simple answer. If he asks more questions then you keep giving him answers. Telling him more right away is not going to help him because it is not bothering him.

וְשֵׂאִינוּ יוֹדְעֵ לְשֵׂאוֹל – אֶת פֶּתַח לוֹ, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר, וְהִגַּדְתָּ לְבִנְךָ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא לֵאמֹר, בְּעִבּוֹר זֶה עָשָׂה ה' לִי בְּצֵאתִי מִמִּצְרַיִם.

What does it mean he cannot ask? Does he not see people doing all these out-of-the-ordinary things and he can't ask "מה זאת"? The way we learn is like this: Why do people ask questions? Because they are coming from a certain perspective or standard and see that what's going on in front of them doesn't match so they ask why! The "Why?" is predicated on a אמינה of how things should be. This son doesn't have and standards for people. Everyone is free to do whatever they want. He sees them do crazy things and he's not bothered. He's not moved to ask on them. So, the בעל הגדה says לו פתח לו - open him up. What does this mean? It means that he doesn't really mean that everything is a free-for-all. You could prove that by walking over to him and stepping on his toe. So why does he profess to say such a narishkeit? Because he is only thinking of himself. If no one has to live up to any standard, then he is free to do whatever he wants. He is free from any and all responsibility and interest in anyone else. We must open him up and show that even in his selfishness, it is his best interest to do mitzvos and רצון ה' לי. בְּעִבּוֹר זֶה עָשָׂה ה' לִי. רצון ה' לי. בְּצֵאתִי מִמִּצְרַיִם shows that Hashem takes care of those who do His will.

גאנץ כלל ישראל we should be זוכה to bring the פסח this year with חג כשר ושמח