
פרשת בא

פרק יג פסוק ח

וְהִגַּדְתָּ לְבִנְךָ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא לֵאמֹר בְּעַבְדוֹר זֶה עָשָׂה יְהוָה לִי בְּצֵאתִי מִמִּצְרָיִם:

מושג

בְּכָל דּוֹר וָדוֹר תִּיב אָדָם לְרִאוֹת אֶת עֲצָמוֹ כְּאִלּוּ הוּא יָצָא מִמִּצְרָיִם.

Translation:

In every generation a man is required to see himself as if he left Egypt.

Explanation:

There are two ways to understand why the Torah would obligate us to see ourselves as if we left Egypt. The first is that this requirement is tied to the obligation to tell the story of the exodus from Egypt to our children, as the beginning of our Pasuk commands. In order to truly tell the story and relay every detail, you have to place yourself in Egypt and feel as if you yourself experienced the exodus. Making the story personal makes it more compelling to our children. The second approach explains that the Torah requires us to understand that even today we are in a spiritual bondage. We must tap into the spirit of freedom imbued into the fabric of the Seder night to free ourselves from the things that limit our spiritual growth. In short, the first approach requires that we place ourselves in the Exodus story, while the second requires that we place the freedom from slavery within ourselves.

Looking in the Pasuk:

The משנה, which is the source of our Musag, infers the lesson from the fact that the end of the Pasuk reads in the first person singular: עֲשֵׂה ה' לִי בְּצֵאתִי מִמִּצְרָיִם.

The fact that the beginning of the Pasuk tells us בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא makes it clear that the Torah is not only talking to those who left מצרים. In addition, both the previous Pasuk, which talks about the obligation to eat מצה, and the following Pasuk, which talks about תפילין, make it clear that we are referring to commands for future generations, and yet the Pasuk expects the father to be able to say עֲשֵׂה ה' לִי בְּצֵאתִי.

NOTES

The source of our Musag is the משנה in (קטז:),¹ which teaches:

בכל דור ודור חייב אדם לראות את עצמו כאילו הוא יצא ממצרים, שנאמר והגדת לבנך ביום ההוא לאמר בעבור זה עשה ה' לי בצאתי ממצרים.

The גמרא is reacting to the fact that the Torah is speaking to future generations who will be telling the story of יציאת מצרים, and speaks in the first person: עשה ה' לי בצאתי. From these words we understand that one is obligated to see himself as if he himself left Egypt. One might challenge that perhaps the Pasuk is only referring to the generation that left Egypt, but not commanding every future generation to feel as if they had left Egypt. To this we may answer that the fact the Pasuk added the word ההוא, seems to infer that we are including even a day in the distant future. Additionally, if we look at the Pasuk preceding our Pasuk - which commands us to eat מצה - and the Pasuk following our Pasuk - which commands us to wear תפילין - we notice that both are obligations for all future generations, not only for those who left Egypt. Therefore, it is obvious to חז"ל that the requirement to feel בצאתי ממצרים applies to all future generations as well².

The question that must be asked is: Why would one be obligated to do so? And, how could one be obligated to feel that something that happened centuries ago happened to him?

To answer the first question we must begin by understanding the function of the Seder night. The Torah has already obligated us to remember יציאת מצרים every day (and night) of our lives, as the Pasuk (דברים טז:א) teaches: למען תזכר את-יום צאתך מארץ מצרים כל ימי חייך. So our question essentially is: In what way is the Seder night different than other any night?

The answer is found in the Pasuk itself, as the Pasuk begins with the words והגדת לבנך. While every night I simply must remember, on this night I am obligated to tell the story to my children; סיפור יציאת מצרים. To best tell the story I must imagine that I myself was there. While the obligation of זכירה can be discharged by simply stating that we remember that Hashem took us out of Egypt, the obligation of והגדת לבנך requires that we go into great detail. To fulfill this obligation, the Haggadah begins our answer to the child by telling us:

עבדים היינו לפרעה במצרים, ויוציאנו יי אלהינו משם בגד תוקה ובזרוע נטויה... ואפילו פלגנו חקמים, פלגנו נבונים, פלגנו זקנים, פלגנו יודעים את התורה, מצוה עלינו לספר ביציאת מצרים. וכל המרבה לספר ביציאת מצרים הרי זה משובח.

This is followed by the story of the Rabbis who remained awake the entire night relating the story of יציאת מצרים. Interestingly, the Haggadah does not say that they were ביציאת מצרים, which I would have thought these great Rabbis would have done, but rather were, מספרים ביציאת מצרים. They told the story in vivid detail as if they had been there and personally witnessed the great miracles that took place. This is very much akin to one who has gone through an incredible event and simply cannot stop speaking about it! Thus, the obligation to feel I was there is a prerequisite to being able to fully relate the story.

There is, however, a different way to understand the obligation. Our Musag may be understood to be relating a significant lesson in how we approach Pesach, and every other holiday for that matter. One should never feel that we are celebrating a historical event, simply marking something that happened in the distant past. Rather, we must understand that seminal events in our history reoccur every year. Therefore, the freedom that occurred during the month of ניסן at the time of יציאת מצרים, became part of time itself and reappears every year at this time.

Therefore, what happened in מצרים actually does happen every year. In a sense while we do not need to be freed from the country called מצרים, we are nevertheless enslaved by other forces which

¹ The Musag is also found in the הגדה של פסח

² See מהרש"א

limit our spiritual growth. Our materialistic passions and physical drives do not allow us to reach our true spiritual potential, restricting our growth. The word **מְצָרִים** can also be read as **מְצָרִים**, restrictions. **יציאת מצרים** is thus understood as a breaking free of these things that restrict us. The spirit of freedom imbued into this time of year allows us, on the night of the Seder, to tap into this powerful spirit to assist in our breaking free.

According to this approach our Musag does not instruct us to try and see ourselves as if we ourselves left Egypt of old, but rather to appreciate that what happened in Egypt affects us to this day. In effect, the first approach requires us to see ourselves as if we were in **מצרים**, while the second requires us to **יציאת מצרים** as if it is happening today. The first approach asks us to tell our children of the physical exodus, while the second asks us to focus on the spiritual freedom we may enjoy if we tap into the spirit of freedom embedded into this night.

We might propose that this is the approach of the Rambam (הלכות חמץ ומצה פ"ז ה"ו) who makes slight changes in the wording of our Musag and writes:

בכל דור ודור חייב אדם להראות את עצמו כאילו הוא בעצמו יצא עתה משעבוד מצרים.

The Rambam requires one to show himself as one who now left the bondage of Egypt. In his understanding of the Musag he changes the word **לראות** to **להראות** and adds the words **עתה משעבוד**. This change in the wording of our Musag seems to support the idea that one must show that he appreciates that the exodus from Egyptian bondage relates to himself as well. It is not important to see yourself as if you physically left Egypt then, but to show yourself and act as one who feels that he has left the bondage of Egypt today. For this reason the Rambam adds the word **עתה**, meaning that the exodus then is likewise relevant to us today³.

Questions for Further Thought:

- a. Are there other מצות that require us to personally experience our history?
- b. If Pesach provides for us a spirit of freedom, what spirit is provided by the other Chagim?

³ According to the above, the Rambam would not connect it to the obligation of **להגדת לבנוך** in any way. This would explain why the Rambam does not mention **להגדת לבנוך** in connection to our Musag, only the obligation to lean and drink the four cups of wine. Even more so, the Rambam does not even mention our Pasuk (which, as stated in the first approach, does connect **ה' לי עשה** but rather brings two Pesukim in **ספר דברים** which speak of the freedom from slavery.

ו: בכל דור ודור חייב אדם להראות את עצמו כאילו הוא בעצמו יצא עתה משעבוד מצרים שנאמר (דברים ו:כג) ואתנו הוציא משם וגו', ועל דבר זה צוה הקב"ה בתורה (שם ה:טו) וזכרת כי עבד היית, כלומר כאילו אתה בעצמך היית עבד ויצאת לחירות ונפדית. ז: לפיכך כשסועד אדם בלילה הזה צריך לאכול ולשתות והוא מיסב דרך חירות, וכל אחד ואחד בין אנשים בין נשים חייב לשתות בלילה הזה ארבעה כוסות של יין.