



A VORT FROM THE ROSH YESHIVA

מורינו הרה"ג ר' אברהם גורביץ שליט"א

חייב אכילת מצה בזמן הזה

מצה זו שאנו אוכלים, על שום מה? על שום שלא הספיק בצקם של אבותינו להחמיץ וכו'.

This matzah that we eat – for what reason? Because the dough of our fathers did not have time to become leavened ...

The Haggadah explains the reason for the *mitzvah* of *matzah*: Klal Yisroel had no time for their dough to rise. However, the Abarbanel raises a question. They were commanded to eat *matzah* even before leaving Mitzrayim, as stated in the *possuk*, *בָּעֶרְבַּת יֹאכְלֶהוּ אֶשׁ וּמִצּוֹת עַל מְרִירִים יֹאכְלֶהוּ, roasted over the fire, and matzos; with bitter herbs shall they eat it (12:8)*. Does this not suggest that there must be another reason beyond what is mentioned in the Haggadah?

To resolve this difficulty, the Rosh Yeshiva *shlita* cites an explanation from the Brisker Rav concerning a challenging passage in the Rambam. The Gemara (*Pesachim* 120a) derives from the *possuk* *בָּעֶרְבַת יֹאכְלֶהוּ מִצַּת, תֹּאכְלוּ מִצַּת*, *in the evening shall you eat matzos (12:18)*, that the obligation to eat *matzah* still exists today, even without the Korban Pesach, and is considered a *mitzvah min haTorah*. However, the Rambam (*Sefer HaMitzvos Aseh* #56) seemingly states the opposite, citing the Mechilta, which indicates that without the Korban Pesach, one **cannot** fulfil the Torah commandment to eat *matzah*. How can the Rambam rule differently from the Gemara?

Many Meforshim grapple with this difficulty, with some attempting to adjust the wording of the Mechilta and Rambam to align with the ruling of the Gemara. The Brisker Rav, however, retains the text as it appears in the Rambam and offers the following explanation. He distinguishes two origins for the obligation to eat *matzah* on Leil Pesach: Firstly, the Torah instructs *תֹּאכְלוּ מִצַּת*, a command which is completely independent of the *mitzvah* of Korban Pesach. Secondly, we are commanded, *בָּעֶרְבַת יֹאכְלֶהוּ אֶשׁ וּמִצּוֹת עַל מְרִירִים יֹאכְלֶהוּ*, in which eating *matzah* is associated with fulfilling the *mitzvah* of eating the Korban Pesach. Since this aspect of eating *matzah* is merely a clause in fulfilling the Korban Pesach (similar to the law regarding eating the Korban Pesach roasted), it follows that without the Korban, this obligation to eat *matzah* would not apply.

With this distinction, the Brisker Rav proposes that the Mechilta and Rambam are discussing the second obligation of *matzah*, which is related to the *mitzvah* of Korban Pesach. Therefore, it is dependent on the Korban Pesach being brought and is therefore not relevant today. In contrast, the Gemara addresses the independent *halachah* of eating *matzah*, which remains an obligation *min haTorah* even in our times.

Based on this introduction, the Rosh Yeshiva addresses the original question posed by the Abarbanel regarding why the Haggadah states that the reason for eating *matzah* is that Klal Yisroel did not have time for their dough to rise. The Haggadah is providing the reason for **our** obligation to eat *matzah*, even in the absence of the Korban Pesach. This cannot simply be attributed to *בָּעֶרְבַת יֹאכְלֶהוּ אֶשׁ וּמִצּוֹת עַל מְרִירִים יֹאכְלֶהוּ*, since that obligation is merely a detail associated with the Korban Pesach. Instead, the *mitzvah* we are fulfilling is that of *תֹּאכְלוּ מִצַּת*, which applies to all generations in all circumstances.

Since this command is not tied to the Korban Pesach, there must be another reason for it, which is על שום שלא הספיק בצקם של אבותינו להחמיץ. Hashem commanded Klal Yisroel to eat *matzah* based on His knowledge of their future haste in leaving Mitzrayim, which would prevent their dough from rising.¹ May we be *zoche* to the *geulah* soon, allowing us to offer the Korban Pesach and to observe the *double* fulfilment when eating *matzah*!

הגדה של פסח

ברוך המקום, ברוך הוא. ברוך שנתן תורה לעמו ישראל, ברוך הוא. כנגד ארבעה בנים דברה תורה וכו'.
Praised be the Ever-Present, praised be He! Praised be He who has given the Torah to His people Yisroel, praised be He! The Torah speaks of four sons ...

The Rosh Yeshiva *shlita* explains that these two praises of Hashem reflect two ways in which we can recognise and appreciate His ways. First, we see Hashem's incredible wisdom manifested in the wondrous world He created. For this, we state ברוך המקום. Second, we perceive Hashem's immense greatness in the Torah and for this we proclaim ברוך שנתן תורה לעמו ישראל.

This concept of recognising Hashem through observing nature and the Torah is articulated by the Rambam (*Sefer HaMitzvos Aseh* #3). The Rambam poses the question: How can a person cultivate their love for Hashem and fulfil the obligation of וְאֶהְבֶּתָּ אֶת ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ (Devarim 6:5)? He cites from Chazal (*Sifrei*) that the next *possuk* provides the answer: וְהָיוּ הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר אֶנְכִי מְצַוֶּךָ הַיּוֹם עַל לְבַבְךָ, *And these words that I command you today shall be upon your heart*. Contemplating Hashem's ways and His Torah fosters an awareness of Him, which in turn inspires one to love Hashem.

However, although we can comprehend aspects of Hashem's ways, it is impossible to fully grasp the extent of His true essence. This is illustrated in the phrase ברוך הוא. First, we praise Hashem by saying ברוך המקום, acknowledging Him as the מקומו של עולם, the Source of all blessings. Then we say ברוך הוא; He is praised for who He is, independent of any reason. This clarifies that while observing the phenomenal world around us offers a glimpse into Hashem's greatness, it is still just a small window.

We also express ברוך שנתן תורה לעמו ישראל, indicating that through the Torah, we gain a deeper understanding of Hashem. Yet, we again emphasise that ברוך הוא. His true essence surpasses our comprehension, and any attempt to fathom His greatness provides only a hint of what lies beyond, which we can never fully attain.

These introductory praises set the stage for the next lesson in the Haggadah, which speaks of the four sons. The simple connection is that since the Torah addresses all types of people, there is even more reason to thank Hashem for giving us the Torah. However, building on the Rosh Yeshiva's explanation, we can understand this juxtaposition differently. It is only due to ברוך הוא - the fact that Hashem conceals Himself beyond our comprehension, that there is a need for the Torah to address the four sons differently. If Hashem had not limited our ability to perceive Him, there would not be the אָחַד חָכָם, וְאָחַד רָשָׁע, וְאָחַד תָּם, וְאָחַד שָׂאִינוּ יוֹדֵעַ לְשֵׂאוֹל. In such a scenario, wickedness, ignorance, or ambiguity would not exist, as everyone would clearly understand the ultimate truth of Hashem and His Torah.

¹ According to this interpretation, although the phrase of בָּעֶרְבַּ תֹּאכְלוּ מִצֵּת was conveyed to Moshe while he was in Mitzrayim, it is understood to refer to the consumption of *matzah* that is unrelated to the Korban Pesach. For further reference, see the Avudraham and Maharam Chalavah (*Pesachim* 116).

חכם מה הוא אומר? מה העדות והחקים והמשפטים אשר צוה ה' אלקינו אתכם? ...

רשע מה הוא אומר? מה העבדה הזאת לכם? לכם - ולא לו. ולפי שהוציא את עצמו מן הכלל כפר בעקר.

The wise son - what does he say? "What are the testimonies, statutes, and laws that Hashem our G-d has commanded you?" The wicked son - what does he say? "What does this avodah mean to you?" "To you", (he says), but not to him! Therefore, because he has excluded himself from the community, he has denied the foundations of our faith

There is a well-known question regarding the passage above. The Haggadah infers from the wicked son's use of the word *לכם*, *you*, that he is distancing himself from the nation. Interestingly, the wise son's way of speech is not much better; he also says *ה' אלקינו אתכם*, referring to the laws that Hashem "commanded **you**." Why does this not raise similar concerns about his perspective?

The Rosh Yeshiva *shlita* addresses the aforementioned difficulty with an insight from R' Chaim Brisker. The Gemara (*Nedarim* 36a) discusses various opinions regarding whether children are obligated to participate in the Korban Pesach based on the concept of *דאורייתא*. R' Chaim (*Hil. Korban Pesach* 5:7) clarifies that, without a doubt, even if there is an obligation for a child to take part in the Korban Pesach, it is not the child's responsibility directly; rather, it is the father who is obligated to offer the Korban on behalf of his child.

Moreover, R' Chaim explains that even according to the opinion that the child himself (through his father, as previously noted) is not obligated in the Korban Pesach, if the father does register his child for it voluntarily, that registration is valid. It is considered as if the child has fulfilled his obligation to offer the Korban Pesach. Consequently, the Rambam rules that if a child reaches the age of *bar mitzvah* between the 14th of Nissan and Pesach Sheni, he is required to offer his Korban Pesach on Pesach Sheni. However, if his father had already registered him for a Korban Pesach while he was still a minor, he would not be obligated to bring the Korban Pesach on Pesach Sheni, as he has already fulfilled his obligation of the Korban Pesach.

Accordingly, if we are to understand the four sons mentioned in the Haggadah as being under *bar mitzvah* age, we can clarify the specific terminology used by the wise and wicked son. The wise son asks his father, *מה העדות והחקים והמשפטים אשר צוה ה' אלקינו אתכם?* *What are the testimonies, statutes, and laws that Hashem our G-d has **commanded** you?* This question is appropriate, as children are never obligated to observe the *mitzvos* commanded.

In contrast, the wicked son asks, *מה העבדה הזאת לכם?* *What does this **avodah** mean to you?* Here, he is not inquiring about the command regarding the Korban Pesach, but rather the actual *avodah* associated with it, which is relevant for even a young child. As R' Chaim explains, all opinions agree that children of any age can engage with and fulfil the requirements of the Korban Pesach. Thus, by the wicked son implying that he has no stake in the *avodah* of the Korban Pesach, he exposes his disdain and desire to distance himself from the collective spiritual attainment that the Korban Pesach represents.

The Shibolei HaLeKet offers a similar explanation. He suggests that because the wise son refers to "our G-d", it can be assumed that he does not intend to exclude himself from the fulfilment of the commandments. Rather, he uses the phrase "commanded **you**" because he is still a minor, and the Korban Pesach cannot be offered solely for minors.

שביעי של פסח

וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הִלְכוּ בַיַּבֶּשֶׁה בְּתוֹךְ הַיָּם וְכוּ'. וַיִּזְשַׁע ה' בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל מִיַּד מִצְרַיִם, וַיֵּרָא יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת מִצְרַיִם מֵעֵדוּת וּבְמִשְׁחָה עַבְדוֹ. אַז יָשִׁיר מֹשֶׁה וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת הַשִּׁירָה הַזֹּאת וְכוּ'.
(שמות יד, כט – טו, א)

And the Bnei Yisroel went on dry land in the midst of the sea ... On that day, Hashem saved Klal Yisroel from the hand of Mitzrayim, and Klal Yisroel saw the Mitzriyim dead on the seashore. Klal Yisroel saw the great hand that Hashem inflicted upon Mitzrayim; and the people revered Hashem, and they had faith in Hashem and in Moshe, His servant. Then Moshe and the Bnei Yisroel sang this song ... (Shemos 14:29 - 15:1)

Rashi questions why the Torah uses the word יָשִׁיר, *will sing*, in the future tense, rather than the past tense - שָׁר, *sang*. Rashi cites the Midrash, explaining that this wording alludes to Techiyas HaMeisim.

The Rosh Yeshiva *shlita* cites an insight from R' Simcha Zissel of Kelm that addresses Rashi's question relating to the word יָשִׁיר, in the future tense. R' Simcha Zissel explains that during joyful moments in life, people may dance and celebrate, but it is difficult to predict how long that joy will last. If you were to ask someone who is dancing exuberantly how long they believe their joy will endure, they might respond, "Maybe a week or a month, but beyond that, who can say what life will bring?"

However, at the crossing of the Yam Suf, the Bnei Yisroel experienced such a profound *emunah* in Hashem that they recognised it would provide them with a lifelong source of joy and serenity. *Emunah* and *bitachon* are the most prized possessions one can acquire, allowing a person to lead a life full of true goodness, unaffected by any circumstance that may arise. This is what the *possuk* was alluding to with the choice of the word יָשִׁיר. Klal Yisroel understood that this was not merely a temporary reason for celebration, but a lasting one.

There is an important and inspiring observation from R' Yosef Leib Bloch of Telz regarding this *parshah* of the Shirah, which resonates with the idea presented by R' Simcha Zissel. The *possuk* emphasises הָיָה אֲזַי יָשִׁיר מֹשֶׁה - **then**, Moshe sang Shirah, indicating that they only sang after a certain event, not beforehand. He noted that even when the Bnei Yisroel experienced the greatest miracle of הִלְכוּ בַיַּבֶּשֶׁה בְּתוֹךְ הַיָּם - walking through the sea on dry land, they did not say Shirah. Furthermore, as the *possuk* continues: מֵעַתָּה יִירָאוּ הָעַם אֶת ה' - they witnessed the demise of their greatest enemies, but they still did not say Shirah. ה' גְּדֹלָה אֶת הַיָּם בְּעֵינֵי הָעַם - They saw all the great deeds Hashem had performed against the Mitzriyim, yet they still did not say Shirah. ה' גְּדֹלָה אֶת הַיָּם בְּעֵינֵי הָעַם - The people drew Yiras Shomayim from what they had experienced, but still did not say Shirah. Only when it was, וַיִּאֱמְנוּ בַה' וּבְמֹשֶׁה עַבְדוֹ - they had acquired trust in Hashem, that אֲזַי יָשִׁיר מֹשֶׁה - **then**, they sang Shirah.

The Telzer Rov explained that the Shirah was a testament to what they had been *zoche* to see and achieve for themselves - *emunah* in Hashem. He emphasised that the most fortunate person is he who possesses *emunah* and complete trust in Hashem, as this is the greatest treasure one could ever attain. This belief is the ultimate reason for praising and singing to Hashem.

May we be *zoche* to attain a great *chizuk* in our *emunah* and *bitachon* during this special Yom Tov. Strengthening ourselves in these areas will enable us to carry the lessons we have learned into our future and experience a long-lasting *simchah*!

בְּבִרְכַת חַג כָּשֶׁר וְשִׂמְחָה!

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