

כ"ט אדר ב' ה'תשע"ט

**A UNIQUE APPROACH TO THE SEDER NIGHT**

בית המנוגע לא היה ולא עתיד להיות ולמה נכתב דרוש וקבל שכר<sup>1</sup>

**T**he main discussion of פרשת תזריע is צרעת, an affliction that appears on the skin, clothes, and house of one who speaks הרע לשון הרע. The גמרא relates (as seen above) that a house afflicted by צרעת has never happened, and will never happen. The גמרא said previously the same about the בן סורר ומורה, the rebellious son, and the עיר הנדחת, the idolatrous city. Why, then, does the תורה teach these topics? As the גמרא proceeds to answer, "דרוש וקבל שכר". We learn them not for any practical reasons, but for the sake of learning לשמה, purely to get reward for תלמוד תורה. Perhaps, the גמרא could be talking about a different type of שכר, a שכר of performing a different מצוה. It's possible that there's something we learn from one of these occurrences to teach a certain הלכה, or perhaps enhance the performance of one or more of the other מצוות. I hope to properly illustrate a scenario in which this idea plays out.

The גמרא<sup>2</sup> presents the שיטה of רבי יהודה, which states that blind people are not obligated to keep the מצוות, based on the premise that they're not חייב in civil court (see the גמרא there). Assuming we hold like this להלכה, what would happen if a blind person would perform a מצוה? Does he deserve more reward than someone who does the מצוה when they have to? The גמרא<sup>3</sup> relates that רב יוסף, who was blind, would throw a party if he was told the הלכה followed רבי יהודה. This is because he reasoned that one who goes out of their way to do a מצוה when they don't have to is more praiseworthy than one who is commanded to do it. However, רבי חנינא said quite the opposite, the one who is commanded gets greater reward! This is because one who is commanded has less of a desire to do the action, as opposed to one who wants to do it when he doesn't have the obligation. In this case, רב יוסף said he would throw a party if he found out the הלכה was **not** like רבי יהודה. Based on the גמרא in בבא קמא, we clearly see the הלכה is indeed against רבי יהודה, and רב יוסף and all the blind people who do מצוות are now living happily.

Being that the הלכה isn't like רבי יהודה, it would be a big חידוש for רב אחא בר יעקב to exempt blind people from מצוות מצרים<sup>4</sup>. He bases his opinion off of a גזירה שוה. By סיפור יציאת מצרים, the הקב"ה says "tell your children...it was because of this that this did this for me". Regarding the בן סורר ומורה, the פסוק<sup>5</sup> says "this son of ours is rebellious". The גמרא in סנהדרין teaches that this פסוק excludes blind parents, as they must be able to point to their son. Since a blind person can't be involved in בן סורר ומורה, the גזירה שוה teaches that a blind person can't fulfill מצוות מצרים.

If this is so, it seems strange that רב יוסף and רב ששת, both of whom were blind, were leading סדרים, as that גמרא in פסחים points out. In the times of the תנאים and אמוראים, it was common for one person to say the הגדה, and fulfill everyone's חיוב based on the principal of שומע כעונה, "hearing is like responding". However, שומע כעונה only works when the one doing the מצוה has the same חיוב as the people he's fulfilling the מצוה for!<sup>7</sup> How, then, can everyone be יוצא their חיוב of מצוות מצרים through רב יוסף and רב ששת? Both of these רבנים hold that the מצוה דאורייתא of מצוות מצרים only applies when there is a פסח. Since, unfortunately, this isn't the case, everyone at the סדר is also

1 סנהדרין עא.

2 בבא קמא פו:-פז.

3 קידושין לא.

4 פסחים קטז:

5 שמות יג.

6 דברים כא.כ

7 ברכות כ:

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only חייב. Therefore, their חיובים are on the same level, and the problem is circumvented.

Ultimately, the גמרא disproves the גזירה שוה of יעקב בר אבא as "זה" is needed by פסח, because there is no other word to use. Whereas you can say "הוא" by בן סורר ומורה, and therefore "זה" comes to teach something specific, this is not so by יציאת מצרים. Thus, the דרשה is invalid, and blind people have no exemption from the מצוה.

We say "כל המרבה לספר ביציאת מצרים הרי זה משבח". If this is so, why are we trying to exempt blind people? Even if they decide to do the מצוה, we know their שכר isn't as much as one who has the מצוה! I would like to humbly suggest two answers, and to introduce the first answer with a famous story: It was almost time for סוכות in וילנא, and the גר"א was looking around frantically for a set of מינים ד'. Due to the weather conditions of a European October, and that this was the age before mass imports and exports, ד' מינים weren't so simple to get. He knew of a wealthy man in the next town who had a set, and sent his גבאי to do whatever he can to bring it back to וילנא. When the גבאי got there, and told the man the significance of the גר"א getting to use his מינים ד', the man was willing to give it over, on the condition that he receives the שכר גאון would be receiving. Having to make a tough decision on the spot, the גבאי conceded. Seeing the disappointed look on the גבאי's face as he returned, the גר"א asked what happened. After relaying the story, the גר"א broke out in a big smile. He said: "The משנה<sup>8</sup> says that we should serve the Master without the condition that we get שכר. However, we inevitably know it will come, so it is virtually impossible. Now that I know I'm not getting שכר, I can fulfill the מצוה in the best way possible!" That סוכות, the גר"א shook ד' מינים like he never did before. Obviously, the case isn't as extreme here. However, the blind man now will do the מצוה consciously knowing he won't get as much שכר as the guy next to him. Perhaps, this is somewhat of a fulfillment of this משנה. It's possible that now, he will do the מצוה in a better way than the guy getting more שכר.

Another possible answer highlights the unique nature of the סדר night. While we have a חיוב to remember יציאת מצרים every day, the מצוה is significantly different on the night of פסח. Normally, we fulfill the חיוב every day through שמע קריאת. While important, it only takes a few minutes to say, and we may not dedicate the necessary amount of כונה to the מצוה. On the flip side, we spend hours on the סדר night delving into the depths of explaining the miracles. The סדר night is a re-experiencing of יציאת מצרים, which was a transcendence of the normal way of the world. Therefore, when normally blind people would anyways be חייב, we show the special nature of this מצוה by conjuring up a הוה אמינא to exempt them, only to have it rejected. This shows that our normal approach to life isn't good enough for such a unique moment. We must transcend our nature as well. בעזרת השי"ת, our סדרים should be so spiritually uplifting that they transcend the physicality of this world, and we should be זוכה to have the next סדר together in ירושלים, fulfilling the מצוה of יציאת מצרים on a דאורייתא level according to all שיטות, with the פסח קרבן.