

ט' ניסן ה'תש"פ

STRIVING FOR GREATER: THE POWER OF PERSISTENCE

We say in the paragraph of צא ולמד לבן that "sought to uproot everything". What exactly does this mean? What is everything, and where do we see that he wanted to destroy it?

The רב יוסף מסלוצק (רמב"ן עה"ת) brings down from תכלת מרדכי (who I think may be the הלוי) that לבן wanted to destroy the "problem" at its source. To understand this, we must first take a look at the גמרא¹, which tells us that if a man sent a שליח to give money to a woman for קידושין, and the שליח dies before the man finds out who the woman is, he is not allowed to marry any woman. This is because we trust that the שליח carried out his mission. Therefore, any woman is a possible ערוה due to the fact that she is possibly a relative of the woman the שליח may have betrothed for the master.

The מדרש² relates that לבן and בתואל were plotting to kill אליעזר. This would prevent him from returning to יצחק and revealing the identity of his new wife, rendering him unable to marry any woman he encounters. Therefore, אברהם's legacy won't endure, and the Jewish People will never be established. The קדושת לוי adds that this is why דוקא the marriage was consummated by בתואל and לבן before they attempted to kill אליעזר. Once this plan failed, לבן never gave up, trying again to end אברהם's legacy when יעקב came into the picture.

The עיקר of the הגדה is the מקרא ביכורים, ארמי אובד אבי, the passage of אבי. Based on what we said before, this קריאה seems very appropriate to base the הגדה off of. We can learn from לבן the power of persistence. Oftentimes, we try to accomplish something, but tend to shy away when the smallest thing doesn't go our way. We should keep trying, and not give up until there's no other option.

How does this relate to the הגדה, to the main theme of פסח? When it came to the מכות, many times פרעה stood stubborn, never willing to succumb until he had no other option. פסח is the time we were designated to be the הנבחר עם. Through extraordinary miracles, הקב"ה was sending us the message that we were to ultimately accept the תורה and be bound to His will. When life isn't bringing down the most obvious signs that השי"ת is with us, it may be hard to recognize that. However, we all have a goal of בן ודבקה. If something doesn't go our way, it's not a reason to fail; it's a reason to try harder. We need to prove to ourselves that we can do it, even when the going gets tough. A good way to reach this point is to pick something small but meaningful, and to do it under any and every circumstance. Let nothing stop you from accomplishing your small goals. Once you master that, move on to bigger and better. One accomplishment will only lead you to want to reach higher, and knowing that you have the power to only makes it easier.