

completing multiple tasks *b'chipazon* so that productivity appears to be high. Maybe you have experienced working in an environment like this, where there is constant pressure to juggle and excel in multiple priorities. In the short term, profits may have increased and targets exceeded. But in the long term, might the pressure to perform impact and corrupt the quality of the work or the quality of relationships with team members?

As an advisor in the Shevet Glaubach Center for Career Strategy and Professional Development at Yeshiva University, I coach students and alumni on evaluating job descriptions, clarifying and upholding their values, and navigating company culture. We encourage developing a personalized multi-stage strategy. They become the captains of their fate, adept at taking the long shorter way. Rather than shortcutting the process, they engage each step of the journey, building and cultivating a great LinkedIn network, attending networking and educational events, identifying areas for professional development, and building relevant industry experience.

As for me, despite the Rambam's omission of Dayenu, I will continue to include it in my Seder. Each stanza is an important and intrinsically valuable step in the unfolding march to freedom. Our Seder shows us how articulating, delineating, and following each step helps us define, refine and achieve our goals. This is the long shorter way.

The Conflicting Themes of the Exodus: The Two Answers to the One Question

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The Seder experience is akin to a multimedia classroom, with an emphasis on audio (songs), visual props (the Seder plate), the experiential (different tastes, leaning, etc.), and, of course, questions and answers. All these elements point to an experience that is both meant to have a child wondering "Why is this night different?" and to provide the tools for a parent to capably answer that question.

So why indeed is this night different? What is the all-important answer that we are so committed to memorably provide, and why does it seem so important for us to care? I believe that the sophisticated lesson plan of the Haggadah means to point us toward two separate answers to this one important question.

That the Exodus is of critical importance to the Jewish story is obvious. So much of the Torah's narrative describes the descent into Egypt and the subsequent redemption. We were commanded to observe countless mitzvot as a reminder to remember that we were taken out of Egypt. Again and again (over 80 times!), the Torah

reiterates that the Exodus is the underlying reason why this or that mitzvah should be performed.

Why is this story so critical to mitzvah observance? Through the ten plagues and the splitting of the sea, it became clear to the Jewish people that there existed a Creator who was the master of the natural world. Moreover, it displayed how this Creator still involved Himself with the goings-on of the world, and with the subsequent giving of the Torah, it was apparent that G-d provided a purpose for our existence. The theological misconceptions that existed until that point in history were debunked by the events of the Exodus.

So, explains the Ramban, yetziat Mizrayim would forever be the fundamental reason behind many of the ritual Mitzvot. Why perform mitzvot that are *bein adam l'makom* (between man and G-d)? Who and what is the nature of this G-d who commands us? Simple: He took us out of Egypt. Through this experience, we "met" Him, understood Him, and began our relationship and covenantal responsibilities with Him.

So on the one hand, yetziat Mizrayim leaves us with very important theological lessons.

But there is another type of mitzvah, the sort that exists between man and his fellow man, where this phrase is also mentioned. How are these interpersonal allusions to Egypt explained?

Perhaps these references point to the other important lesson of Egypt, the ethical lesson. The Jews were to forever remember their experience in Egypt because it was to remind them in every generation to protect the vulnerable and to be kind to the stranger. Why? Because we are meant to remember what it was like to be a stranger in Egypt, what it was like to be vulnerable. This night is the basis for mitzvot that are *bein adam l'chaveiro*.

It results that our ethical and theological underpinnings result from our experiences in Egypt and our Exodus from it. It is these two great themes that are so important to impart.

On the Seder night, we act as slaves (*matzah*, *maror*) and as free men (*wine*, *leaning*). We don't only do these in sequence, to imply that on this night we began as slaves and became free, rather we mix the metaphors, alternating from messages of slavery to freedom and back. Perhaps we emphasize both of these experiences to express that they each have something to teach. Slavery reminds us of our basic ethical responsibilities, while the Exodus instructs us toward appropriate theology and a proper understanding of G-d in our world.

These two themes might explain a famous argument found in the Gemara, *Pesachim* 116a, between Rav and Shmuel. They argue over a statement in the Mishna that describes the answer to the son's "*Mah Nishtana*," the child's quest to make sense of the significance

of the night. The Mishnah states "*Matchil b'gnut umisayem b'shvach*," that we should answer the questions with history, beginning with the lowest point of the narrative and culminating with the highest.

The Amoraim Rav and Shmuel argue about which episode in Jewish history this refers to. Shmuel says that the "lowest point" refers to "*avadim hayinu l'Pharaoh b'Mitzrayim*," the reference to when we were slaves. To him, the "highest point" would refer to when we were redeemed from that bondage.

Rav says that the "lowest point" refers to "*Mitchila ovdei avodah zara hayu avoteinu*," the reference to how originally, our forefathers were idol worshippers and were far removed from any relationship with G-d. The "high point" refers to the events of the Exodus and the Jews being brought close to G-d. What is behind this debate?

Perhaps Rav and Shmuel argue about which of the two themes is the greater theme of the evening. To Rav, the story of the evening is about theology and the Jewish people's journey from being idol worshippers to a people who discovered the correct and direct understanding of what G-d and His world are about. To Rav, the possibility of the relationship we seek through mitzvot is only possible through the introduction we received at the Exodus.

According to Shmuel, the evening is about recounting the fact we were once slaves and ended up

as free men. We are to remember the abuse of slavery and to remind ourselves of that experience, and to reject and decry mistreatment of the vulnerable in any form. His lesson is one of ethics.

Rav's night is about theology. Shmuel's is about ethics. They argue about which is the main theme, but of course, they are both correct. Both of their opinions, and memorial tidbits for both freedom and slavery, are embedded in the rituals of the Seder night. The symbols vacillate between these themes so that we are consistently reminded of the importance of both of these critically important lessons.

Theology and ethics are two inseparable parts of Judaism. They manifest themselves in *mitzvot bein adam l'Makom*, mitzvot between man and G-d, and in *mitzvot bein adam l'chaveiro*, mitzvot between man and man. Each takes up its own Tablet of the Ten Commandments, implying the balance of power between them.

So, why is this night different from all other nights? What lesson is so important that we keep our children awake and use whatever educational tools we can muster to teach? The answer is obvious. On this night, Judaism learned of its fundamentals of theology and ethics. The two poles of Jewish behavior are charged by the experience of this powerful evening and are expressed in its dual themes. On the Seder night, we attempt to impart these ideas to our children, and more important, to ourselves.