



*Yeshivat Ma'alot*

*Parashat Bo*

*Rav Yehoshua Weitzman shlit"a*

ישיבת מעלות

פרשת בא

רב יהושע ויצמן שליט"א

### *Linking the Generations*

Every year as all of Klal Yisrael gathers around the Seder table, the story of the four sons is read. Each son asks a question of his father. Three out of the four questions are found in this week's parasha (Rasha: 12, 26-27, Sh'eno Yodea Lishol: 13, 8, Tam: 13, 14-15). The question of the Chacham is found in Sefer Devarim (6, 23-25) as Bnei Yisrael prepares to enter Eretz Yisrael. Both the Rasha, the evil son, and the Chacham, the wise son, ask detailed questions. By understanding the depth of their questions one can learn how to answer and relate to them. The Rasha asks "what is this service (the korban pesach) to you?!" The Chacham wants to understand the same thing, yet his interest comes from a different place. He asks "what are these testimonies, rules, and laws that Hashem our Lord as commanded?"

What causes such similar questions to be asked by such opposite people? The answer lies in the difference of when each brother posed his question. When Bnei Yisrael are about to leave Mitzrayim, questioning the importance of the korban pesach is out of place. Such a person is removing himself from Klal Yisrael and the process of geulah that is occurring in their midst. Yet when asked prior to entering Eretz Yisrael, this question is appropriate and meaningful.

The Chacham's question is not only about the specific laws of Pesach, rather it is hunger to know how the values of the Torah will be established in a changing world. "How could it be," the son asks, "that the same laws, rules, and guidelines that guided you as you left Mitzrayim and wandered in the desert will be able to guide us as we enter Eretz Yisrael? Will they be able to uphold us as we meet new challenges such as conquering the land, battling the nations that live there, and beginning life without outwardly seeing Hashem's miraculous intervention?" Such a question is legitimate and encouraged. As the times change, as people's outlook on life become different, as the entire generation becomes influenced by other influences, how can life go on as if things are the same?

What is the reply that the Chacham is given? The Haggada says that he is told a halacha from hilchot pesach- after eating the korban pesach, it is prohibited to eat anything else (afikoman). The Gemara<sup>1</sup> inquires as to what the meaning of afikoman is. Rav explains that it means that one cannot move to eat with another chaburah, another group. (In the times of the Beit Hamikdash, each chaburah brought their own

<sup>1</sup> Pesachim 119b

korban pesach and they ate it together.) Shmuel says that the meaning of afikoman is that one cannot eat any other types of foods that one enjoys after eating the korban pesach. Both of these answers stem from the same source; being consistent and systematic. According to Rav's opinion, when one begins with a certain chaburah, he may not switch over to another one while in the middle of eating. Switching groups represents being inconsistent and making decisions based on emotions of the moment. Shmuel's opinion also reflects similar values. There are times when everybody needs to "taste the same thing." There is no room for each person to indulge in foods that are to his own personal liking. In such situations there is one objective way that everyone needs to follow without taking into consideration individual preferences. This is the answer given to the Chacham- even though the world is changing and society is constantly evolving, our values stand strong from generation to generation. In every generation one must see how to align his life with the values and mitzvot of the Torah.

In generations that live during "historical intersections" such as Yitziat Mitzrayim or entering Eretz Yisrael, many questions arise. "What is the relationship between the Torah of our fathers and us? Are the values those previous generations looked up to still applicable in our daily lives?" The Torah teaches that in these times it is especially important to fulfill the mitzvah of "V'higadeta l'vincha", telling over the story of Yitziat Mitzrayim to ones children. At times like these, when things may seem not sturdy, it is crucial to strengthen the family unit. By having a strong family connection, one is in essence connecting the generations of the future with the generations of the past and the values that have been passed down for years and years.

So too, in this generation similar questions arise, with great intensity. In a generation where reality evolves and changes at such a fast pace, it seems that the gap between parents and children widens much quicker. There is a feeling that parents are not able to educate their children, who seem to be much more advanced than they are. It is especially important that in this generation people work to strengthen the family unit and the connection between the older and younger generations. One must internalize that eternal values, which are the foundations of our nation, are inherited from parents and elders. Through this one can connect himself to the generations before him and be a link in the chain to the generations after him as well.