

And so that you may relate in the ears of your son and your son's son that I made a mockery of Egypt. (10:2)

We celebrate the exodus from Egypt annually on *Pesach*, when we recall the many miracles which Hashem wrought for us. Veritably, the Exodus was a seminal event, second in importance only to the Giving of the Torah. What happened at that time to our forebears carries weight for us to this very day. After all, had they not been liberated from the Egyptian bondage, where would we be today? Indeed, it makes sense for children to celebrate their parents' wedding anniversary. Had their parents not wed, the children would never have been born. Therefore, the parents' wedding celebration is not only an event for the parents to mark; it also touches on the lives of their children.

While it is important that the wedding itself be celebrated and remembered, should the menu that was served that night be equally as important? Should it be a primary part of remembrance of the occasion? Is it important whether they served chicken or fish, steak or sushi that night? The important thing is that the parents were married that night – not the menu! Likewise with events surrounding the Exodus; we are grateful that we left Egypt, but why are we so strongly commanded to tell over the story at such great length, relating everything that took place – every plague, every detail? Is that not similar to ruminating over the menu at one's parents' wedding, when all that is really important is celebrating the actual event?

Horav Simcha Wasserman, zl, explains that this teaches us an important lesson concerning *yetzias Mitzrayim*: It is not a series of events that took place thousands of years ago which has some remote relationship to us. No! These events happened to us and their effect on us continues to this very day. In his commentary to the Torah, *Ramban* writes that one of the reasons the Torah discusses so many of the events which occurred during the Egyptian exodus (in minute detail) is that they teach us the fundamentals of *emunah*, faith in Hashem.

We witnessed *Hashgachah*, Divine Providence. The world does not run like a machine. Hashem interacts with Creation/nature. He is in control of every aspect of the world's functioning. He controls everything in the world, in our lives – everything. He takes an interest in what takes place. He is concerned. When Moshe *Rabbeinu* predicted that an event would occur – it happened exactly as he said it would. Nothing “just happened.” Hashem made it happen!

Ramban says that every event that happened is an essential lesson in *emunah*. Every event is demonstrated in such dramatic terms, so that it sinks into our minds and we constantly remember it. The miracles of Egypt are analogous to the wedding! The miracles and wonders that accompanied us then continue to chaperone us to this very day. The names of the miracles might change, but their Source is the same.

“*B'chol dor va'dor chayav adam liros es atzmo ki'ilu hu yatzah mi'Mitzrayim*“; in every generation, a person is obligated to view himself as if he (personally) went out of Egypt (*Hagaddah Shel*

Pesach). We, too, experienced the process of Redemption. We, too, should be grateful for it. We must learn from every event that took place then – because it happened to us. It was our wedding too! In order to learn the lessons, we must focus on each one. They are much more than just the menu. They are the wedding.

Our *emunah* in Hashem is incredible. *Emunah* is our light. A Jew who does not have it is in the dark. With it, we are able to see, to keep on going in the midst of the greatest and most palpable darkness. The fact that Jews who survived the Holocaust were able to rebuild their lives is a tribute to their *emunah*. Those who lost it, sadly had their light extinguished. With *emunah*, they were able to see the future amidst the overwhelming darkness of the present. Thus, they were able to “dust themselves off”, pick themselves up, rebuild, and raise new families to believe in Hashem. They knew there was a reason for the tragedy. Hashem was with them throughout, and He had a reason. One day the light that we have now will shine brighter as it illuminates the answers to all of our questions.

Emunah keeps us going. It is the engine that drives our lives. It is the reason that so many of our own people envy us. We can see. Sadly, they refuse to put on the lenses of *emunah*. So they go through life existing, without meaning, envious that we have it and they do not. All they have to do is light the match. It is there within them as well. Sadly, they would rather stay in the dark and denigrate those who have taken the initiative, those who refuse to walk blindly.

This is the only way a Jew can live. *Horav Yissacher Frand* relates (“Listen To Your Messages”) hearing the remonstrance of an observant pharmacist in Brooklyn who asked, “What should I do? I see the worst forms of sickness. I dispense drugs for the worst types of diseases – not just strep throat and ear infections. It is so difficult. Why is this happening? Why should people suffer so much? I recently filled a prescription for a young father suffering from end-stage terminal cancer who said, ‘I am teaching my five-year-old son to recite *Kaddish yasom!*’ I went to *shul* this morning, and I cried throughout the entire *davening*.”

I read this story, and I realized that, amidst his terrible physical and emotional pain, the father could think of nothing else other than imbuing his young son with love and respect for Hashem, teaching him how to say *Kaddish*, how to exalt and sanctify the Almighty. That defines *emunah*. That father was not living in darkness. He saw the light, and he was transferring it to his son!

This is how people live in the Holy Land amidst terror attacks. Their deep-rooted *emunah* illuminates their lives, as they continue to learn and review the lessons of *yetzias Mitzrayim*. I write this on my father’s fiftieth *yahrtzeit*. He was an individual of enormous faith. Otherwise, how could he, together with my mother, rebuild their lives, be the progenitors of three children, so soon after losing everything: family, friends and all material assets during the Holocaust. They had the light of *emunah* to guide them through the darkness that had enveloped so many others. Fifty years ago, the chance that those three children and their broken-hearted mother would “make it” was very slim. The *emunah* with which our mother raised us kept us going through thick and thin. My father

may physically have been gone, but his legacy of faith illuminated our lives. Today, as he gazes down from his rightful place in *Gan Eden*, he sees that his *emunah* paid off. Indeed, I feel strongly that he saw this all through his life, during the years of terror, followed by the years of extreme material challenge. He saw the light at the end of the tunnel. That is *emunah*.

People wonder why Hashem has not wrought miracles of the caliber that were manifest in Egypt. A well-known incident which occurred with **Horav Yisrael Salanter, zl**, sheds light on this query. An assimilated Jew approached Rav Yisrael and told him that his daughter, who was an accomplished dancer, had asked him, "We are always relating miracles which occurred thousands of years ago. Why do we not see miracles today?"

[Veritably our lives are filled with miracles. They are covert and require one to open his eyes in order to see them. Someone who keeps his eyes shut or has myopic or distorted vision – due to his desire to see only those things that support his perverted sense of morality and culture – sees either only what he wants to see or sees nothing at all.]

Rav Yisrael did not immediately respond, but he waited until the man began bragging about his daughter's extraordinary dancing ability. Rav Yisrael said, "I have difficulty believing that your daughter is such a consummate dancer. For all I know, she does not even know how to dance."

The father said, "*Rebbe*, I am telling you the truth. My daughter is a magnificent dancer."

Rav Yisrael countered, "If she is that good, let her come and dance for me."

The father said to his daughter, "I would like you to put on a show for the Rabbi, so that he will believe me that you dance."

The girl replied indignantly, "I should dance because some Rabbi does not believe I know how to dance? Let him look at my diploma from the most prestigious school of dance. I am certainly not going to dance just for him!"

Rav Yisrael was waiting for this likely response. Arrogance often accompanies a lack of observance. The assimilated (frequently) look askance at their observant brothers and sisters because, otherwise, they are the ones who are out of place. We can ask the skeptics: "What do you want? Hashem should come dancing into Vilna, making overt miracles, because one non-believer does not believe that He can perform miracles?"

Hashem owes us nothing. We owe Him everything!