

"You shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt." (16:12)

Why is it necessary to remember that we were once slaves in Egypt? One would think that remembering the miracle of the Exodus should be the prime focus of remembrance. **Horav Shimon Schwab, zl**, offers the following rationale. In the *Talmud Megillah 4a*, *Chazal* teach that one is obligated to read the *Megillah* at night and to repeat it the next day. *Rashi* attributes this *halachah* to the fact that *Klal Yisrael* cried out to Hashem at night and during the day. This *halachah* is perplexing! Are we to celebrate freedom and joy -- or are we to remain apathetic, with our minds emphasizing the "down" side of the Egyptian liberation, the toil and torment, the grief and sorrow, of being a slave to Pharaoh?

We derive from here, claims *Horav Schwab*, that the actual *tzarah*, affliction, plays an integral role in the efficacy of the *mitzvah*. The *tzarah* is not there simply by chance. It is through Divine Providence that Hashem paves the way for us to be worthy of participating in a miracle. Thus, the affliction is an important component of the miracle. By remembering the affliction, we also recall the miracle.

Indeed, the opening declaration in the *Hagaddah* is *thbg tnjk tv*, "*This is the bread of affliction*," the *matzo* and *marror*, bitter herbs, that we eat are to remind us of the manner in which the Egyptians made bitter our lives. The bitterness and pain are an essential part of the miracle and, therefore, should also be recalled.

In the *Talmud Avodah Zarah 9a*, *Chazal* comment that the world will exist for six thousand years - of which two thousand will be void, two thousand will be filled with *Torah* and the last two thousand will be considered the *Y'mos Ha'Moshiach*. According to *Chazal*, the terrible decrees, the cruel persecutions to which the Jews have been subjected for these last almost two thousand years are all part of the "birth pains" of the advent of *Moshiach*. When that glorious day comes in which *Moshiach Tzidkeinu* will arrive to herald a new era of peace and joy, we will be able to understand how all of the *tzaros* we underwent were part of the ultimate miracle of Redemption.