NHS Sedra Sheet

Parshas Bo – A Hasty Exit - Dr J H Freilich

ו' שבט תשע"ו – 16th January 2016 – שבת פ' בא

In this week's sedra, the Posuk says (Shemos 12 v 11) ואכלתם אותו בחפזון, You shall eat it - the Korbon Pesach - in haste. We find a Midrash that says 'In this world you will eat it in haste, because you went out of Eretz Mitzraim in haste, but in the future you will not go out in haste.' Later on, the Midrash relates 'The Bnei Yisroel prepared themselves at night to depart early morning. The Egyptians decided to pursue after them because they had taken their possessions. הקב"ה said to the Bnei Yisroel What was the cause for this to happen ? Your haste in going out. From now on, you will not depart in haste.' The Dubna Maggid, in his sefer Ohel Yaacov on Chumash, finds this Midrash puzzling. The Bnei Yisroel didn't do anything of their own accord but were following Hashem's instructions. In fact our Posuk above commands them to eat it in haste. Why then does the Midrash seem to hold the Bnei Yisroel responsible for being pursued by the Egyptians, on account of this חפזון.

Other questions the Maggid raises is why did it become an obligation to eat the Pesach in חפזון just because we left Egypt in haste, and also, why should leaving an hour or two early, before morning, result in the Torah repeatedly mentioning that we left in חפזון ?

The Maggid explains that this notion of חפזון is telling us something of fundamental importance. First, we have to appreciate why we had to suffer four exiles when Hashem only revealed one exile to Avraham Ovenu. This, despite the assertion that Hashem never hid from Avraham what he intended to do (cf. Breishis 18 v. 17). But if the Bnei Yisroel had stayed in Egypt the full four hundred years that Hashem had told Avraham, there would not have been a need for any further exiles. However, the Bnei Yisroel forced the issue, as they were weary of the labour. They cried out exceedingly to Hashem so that Hashem had to bring forward the Redemption before the allotted time. Thus there was an onus on the Bnei Yisroel for this rescheduling, and consequently, there remained on us an obligation to complete the bondage in subsequent exiles.

With this, we can better understand the dialogue between הקב"ה and משה רבינו when He said (Shemos 3 v 14) אהיה אשר אהיה . Chazal tell us that this was alluding to הקב"ה being with the Bnei Yisroel in future exiles. משה רבינו felt it was too painful to pass this information on at this juncture and so הקב"ה revised the statement. According to the way the Maggid views it, הקב"ה needed to excuse Himself to the Bnei Yisroel for the necessity of these additional exiles. However, it was all in keeping with the original covenant with Avraham Ovenu. הקב"ה wasn't adding to the years of suffering but making up for the shortfall of bondage in Golus Mitzraim. Nevertheless, הקב"ה promised that He would still be with them in any future Golus just as He was with them in Mitzraim.

Now, says the Maggid, we can understand the significance of חפזון in our rituals in a different light. We are commanded to eat the Korbon Pesach in a manner of one hastily going on his/her journey to remind us that we left Mitzraim before the intended time. We were still meant to be in Golus and bondage. That is why the Torah repeatedly reminds us that we went out in haste. It was not simply a matter of departing a little early at night time instead of dawn but a matter of pre-empting the Redemption because we couldn't bear the bondage any more. However, as the Novi says (Yeshaya 60) 'You shall complete the days of your mourning' that is to say, in the future, we will have completed, in full, the days of Golus and the גאולה will come at the right time. Hence, like our Midrash says above, ' in the future you will not go out in haste'

In memory of Mrs Esther Freilich's uncle, Mr Frank Hershkovits ר' ע"ה אפרים בן ר' אשר אנשל a Holocaust survivor who established a בית נאמן בישראל in New York . Niphtar 29th Teves 5776.

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