



Adapted from the sefer **במוצאי שבת** a collection of maamarim on
"תנא דבי אליהו" given by the Tolner Rebbe shlita at Melave Malka

Melave Malka Parshas Bo 5759

לכם (and it will be when your children say "what is this service to you?")

We all recognize this quote from our parsha as the statement of the **בן רשע** in the Hagada. Surprisingly, the **רבי ישמעאל** describes these words as "good tidings".

"בשורה טובה נתבשרו ישראל באותה שעה, שהן עתידין לראות בנים ובני בנים להם" (The Jewish People received the good news at that moment, that they will have children and grandchildren).

Many people ask - how can we define this as "good news" if the children described ask the question of the **בן רשע**? Doesn't the author of the Hagada instruct us to respond harshly with the words "**בעבור זה עשה ה' לי בצאתי ממצרים**", and to spell out the inference, **לוי ולא לו, אילו היה שם לא היה נגאל**. (For this Hashem took me out of Mitzrayim – me, but not him, if he had been there, he would not have been redeemed). Where are the good tidings in the knowledge that we will have such descendants?

We can begin to address this question with a comment of the Maharal. The Torah, in our parsha, teaches us how to respond to the **בן רשע**, but with a very different response than the one we find in the Hagada.

"ואמרתם זבח פסח הוא לה' אשר פסח על בתי בני ישראל במצרים בנגפו את מצרים ואת **בתינו הציל**". (And you should say that this is a Pesach sacrifice to Hashem who skipped over the houses of the Jewish people, when he struck the Egyptians and saved our houses).

Why, asks the Maharal, does the author of the Hagada ignore this response, and instead instruct us to respond with the harsh message of **לוי ולא לו**?



[1]

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Really, there are two different levels of **בן רשע**. When we see the son on the first level, we understand that he can return to a life of Torah, if we approach him with love and inclusion. The word **בתינו**, **our** houses, signals this inclusion. We let him know that despite his wrongdoings, we view him as an integral part of our house. The Torah's message that we will have such a **בן רשע**, should be viewed as good news. The Torah informs us that even if he strays, we can bring him back with love and inclusion. That is certainly a reason for gratitude.

Only if it becomes clear that we are dealing with the second level **רשע**, who will not respond to the love and inclusion of **בתינו**, does the Hagada instruct us to wake him up with the harsh message of **לי ולא לו**.

The Torah provides us with clear guidance. Even if our children, grandchildren, or family members stray far from Torah **לצלח**, we must greet them happily, and let them know that we value them and value their opinions. They should know that we want them close to us, and that we view them as part of **בתינו**, our houses and community. We should draw them close with the method described in Hoshea "בחבלי אדם" (I will draw them close with cords of love).

This approach can cultivate the child's desire to strengthen his connection to family and community and to demonstrate that he values and desires that inclusion.

However, if we show the **בן רשע** that in our eyes, he is no longer part of us, his heart turns away and he has no desire to develop any connection to his family or community. Declaring that he is "out", unfortunately leads to the son fulfilling that definition by severing all ties with little hope for his return **לרחל**.

People were amazed to see my grandfather **זי"ע**, sincerely rejoice with every Jew he met, without paying attention to their level of observance. Even people of degraded character or behavior were drawn to him and loved being with him.

I frequently share a story that I saw with my own eyes. Once, after davening at the Kosel, as my grandfather was leaving the plaza, he noticed a man who had abandoned the Torah observance of his youth. My grandfather approached him with a smile and began to speak with him. The man said, "If you only knew how much I have sinned, you wouldn't be happy to see me".

My grandfather responded, "I promise you that in shamayim, you are more beloved than I am". The man scoffed at this statement. My grandfather responded forcefully,



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"I will swear by the kedusha of the Kosel, that in shamayim, you are more beloved than I am."

Despite his old age and his difficulty walking, my grandfather returned to the Kosel, placed his holy hands on the stones and declared, "אני נשבע", "I swear, by the kedusha of the Kosel Hamaaravi, that Hakadosh Boruch Hu loves you more than he loves me." Upon hearing this, the man broke into tears.

With Hashem's help, when we learn to discern the good in each person, and to look at each person with "ayin tova", we will merit to see homes full of "good fruit" . בנימ ובני בנימ עוסקים בתורה ובמצוות, אכ"ר



[3]

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