

“We Will Do and We Will Hear”

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In the section of the Passover Haggada known as Dayyenu we read “If G-d had brought us to Mt. Sinai and not given us the Torah, that would have sufficed for us.” On the surface this statement seems strange.

The basic idea of “Dayyenu” is that we should not take G-d’s bountiful gifts for granted but should examine each one and discover its special value. Thus had G-d only redeemed us from Egypt and not split the Red Sea for us; or had He not caused the Egyptians to give us their wealth; or had He not provided the Manna this would be more than we deserved. We must divest ourselves of a false sense of entitlement and appreciate the significance of every particular gift that G-d has bestowed on us.

However it is difficult to comprehend why we would be thankful to G-d had He merely brought us to Mt. Sinai, and not given us the Torah. The purpose of the gathering was to receive the Revelation. What value would it have if G-d had not given us the Torah?

Yet the Haggada teaches that our very presence at Sinai even without the gift of Torah is a great benefit for which we must have profound gratitude. How are we to understand this?

We read in Deuteronomy (4:35) “You have been shown to know that Hashem He is G-d there is none beside Him.” The giving of Torah was not the only purpose of Sinai. Something more fundamental occurred. For the first and only time in human history G-d revealed His existence in the clearest and most compelling manner to a chosen nation. Our entire purpose in this world is to live a life which is rooted in knowledge and awe of our Creator.

G-d did not want us to be in doubt as to the most important truth of human life. He therefore orchestrated an event which would bear witness to all generations that He alone is our King.

The Haggada teaches that the privilege of being present at the manifestation of His existence is “*Enough*”. It is all that we need to be inspired to live a life of truth and righteousness.

G-d, however, went further. He gave us the Torah which maps out the road we must take, commandments we must observe, ideas we must study in order to attain the lofty goals He envisioned for us. There were, thus, two aspects to the Sinai experience; revelation of G-d’s Existence and transmission of His Torah.

The bestowal of a gift requires a recipient. *Matan Torah* (Giving of Torah) could not take place unless there was a people willing to assume the responsibilities which come with acceptance. Our forefathers rose to the occasion and proclaimed, “we will do and we will hear”. We will perform the *Mitzvot*, study, teach and preserve G-d’s Torah for our selves, our children, our nation and, all mankind.

It is the historical mission of the Jewish people to become partners with G-d in fulfilling His plan of perfecting the world. Shavuot is the anniversary of the greatest moment in history when an entire nation stood face-to-face with the Divine. It calls upon each generation of Jews to renew the pledge of "We Will Do and We Will Hear".

Let us therefore embrace Torah and *Mitzvot* with a new passion and become what we were intended to be; "A kingdom of ministers and a holy nation".