

אלו קרבנו לפני הר סיני,
ולא נתן לנו את התורה

דינו:

Dayeinu

אלו קרבנו לפני הר סיני, ולא נתן לנו את התורה

If He had brought us near to Mount Sinai, but had not given us the Torah, it would have sufficed for us!

This stanza of the *Dayeinu* poem sounds very strange. Wasn't the Jewish people taken out of Egypt and brought to Mount Sinai precisely in order to receive the Torah there? When Moshe stood before the Burning Bush at Mount Sinai, Hashem told him, "When you will bring this nation out of Egypt, you will serve God on this mountain."¹¹⁴ Hashem was referring to *Matan Torah*, the Giving of the Torah on that mountain, so what would have been the purpose of bringing the nation to Mount Sinai if they were not going to receive the Torah there?

When the *yetzer hara*, in the guise of the primeval Serpent, tricked Adam and Chavah into eating of the *Eitz HaDa'as* (Tree of Knowledge) in *Gan Eden*, it injected them with a foul *zuhamah* (spiritual poison). The Serpent's *zuhamah* became an integral part of their very being — a foreign imposition of which they were unable to cleanse themselves. When Chavah conceived, her innocent children contracted that *zuhamah* too, which they, in turn, passed on to their own offspring. Thus, the effects of that original sin live on in the person of every human being.

Hashem did not create Adam and Chavah as divisive and argumentative beings. On the contrary, they were created as

114. *Shemos* 3:12.

Kaddesh

Urchatz

Karpas

Yachatz

Maggid

Rachtzah

Motzi
Matzah

Maror

Korech

Shulchan
Orech

Tzafun

Barech

Hallel

Nirtzah

If He had brought us near to Mount Sinai,
but had not given us the Torah, **it would have sufficed for us!**

two people formed from a single human being. Those undesirable qualities of strife and argument were introduced into the human psyche along with the *zuhamah* of the primeval Serpent. That spiritual poison erected a barrier that separated people from one another, a barricade that prevented one person's soul from uniting with another's, a partition that did not allow two people to see eye to eye or agree with one another. It brought division, dissent, and dispute; people grew further and further apart.

Of course, the further apart they grew from one another, the more they distanced themselves from their Creator, for holiness cannot be found where there is divisiveness. Moreover, Hashem does not like disunity. He is One and He desires that all His creatures be in harmony in His service as well. When a nation is united in serving Hashem, He endows its members with His special blessing and sanctity, for which He created them. However, they must take the initial step in the lengthy process to rid themselves of the Serpent's *zuhamah*.

The Torah describes the encampment at Mount Sinai in a unique manner. *Shemos* 19:2 states, "Yisrael encamped there," but uses the singular form of the verb, וַיָּחֵן, literally, "he rested," instead of the plural form, וַיָּחֲנוּ, "they rested." The Midrash¹¹⁵ explains that the singular verb form indicates that Bnei Yisrael had arrived at Mount Sinai, כְּאִישׁ אֶחָד בְּלֵב אֶחָד, "As if they were one man with one heart." That is, they were totally united in mind and in spirit. They had succeeded in coming together

115. *Mechilta*, cited by Rashi.

אלו נתן לנו את התורה,
ולא הכניסנו לארץ ישראל

דינו:

אלו הכניסנו לארץ ישראל,
ולא בנה לנו את בית הבחירה

דינו:

על אחת כמה וכמה טובה כפולה ומכפלת למקום
עלינו. שהוציאנו ממצרים. ועשה בהם שפטים. ועשה
באלהיהם. והרג את בכוריהם. ונתן לנו את ממונם.
וקרע לנו את היים. והעבירנו בתוכו בחרבה. ושקע
צרינו בתוכו. וספק צרכנו במדבר ארבעים שנה.
והאכילנו את המן. ונתן לנו את השבת. וקרבנו לפני
הר סיני. ונתן לנו את התורה. והכניסנו לארץ ישראל.
ובנה לנו את בית הבחירה לכפר על כל עונותינו:

רבו גמליאל היה אומר, כל שלא אמר שלושה דברים
אלו בפסח לא יצא ידי חובתו, ואלו הן:

פסח. מצה. ומרור:

in perfect harmony. They had taken that initial step to cleanse themselves of the Serpent's spiritual poison. They had become one: one people with one ideal, one nation serving Hashem in unity, one nation capable of removing the *zuhamah*.

If Hashem had brought us before Mount Sinai but not given us the Torah, it would have sufficed for us, for it is there that we became united. It is there where we began the process of ridding our nation of the spiritual poison that has been the

Kaddesh

If He had given us the Torah, and had
not brought us into the Land of Israel,
it would have sufficed for us!

Urchatz

If He had brought us into the
Land of Israel, and had not built
the Holy Temple for us, it would have sufficed for us!

Karpas

Yachatz

Maggid

How much more so, therefore, are we indebted to the Omnipresent for the manifold favors bestowed upon us! That He took us out of Egypt AND wrought judgments upon them AND their gods, AND slew their firstborn, AND gave us their wealth, AND split the sea for us, AND took us through it on dry land, AND drowned our enemies in it, AND gave us our needs in the desert for forty years, AND gave us manna to eat, AND gave us the Shabbos, AND brought us near to Mount Sinai, AND gave us the Torah, AND brought us to the Land of Israel, AND built us the Holy Temple to bring us atonement for all of our sins!

Rachtzah

Motzi
Matzah

Maror

Korech

Shulchan

Orech

Tzafun

Barech

Hallel

Nirtzah

Rabban Gamliel used to say: On Pesach night, whoever does not speak about three things has not fulfilled his obligation, namely:

the *Pesach* offering, matzah, and *maror*.

scourge of all humanity ever since the First Couple's misadventure in *Gan Eden*.¹¹⁶

116. In his commentary to *Shemos* 19:2, the Alshich explains how each of the various time periods associated with *Mattan Torah* — the forty-nine days before Hashem gave the Torah; the six-day wait after the people arrived at the mountain; the forty days Moshe spent on the mountaintop before Hashem gave him the *luchos* — was a further step in the cleansing process.