

THE TELLING - מגיד

"...מצווה עלינו לספר ביציאת מצרים. וכל המרבה לספר ביציאת מצרים, הרי זה משובח."
"...it is incumbent upon us to tell the story of the Exodus from Egypt. And the more one tells of the Exodus from Egypt, the more one is praiseworthy."

"...ואחרי כן יצאו ברכוש גדול..." בראשית טו, יד

"...and afterwards they shall go out with great wealth." Genesis 15:14

"Please (na) speak in the ears of the people, and let them ask every man of his neighbor, and every woman of her neighbor, vessels of silver and vessels of gold. (Exodus 11:2)

It was said in the *Beit Midrash* of Rabbi Yannai: "*Na* (please) can only be an expression of request. The Holy One said to Moshe, 'Please, go say to them, Please ask of the Egyptians vessels of silver and gold,' so that the righteous man (Avraham) will not say, 'He fulfilled in them *They shall enslave and oppress them*, (Genesis 15:13), but He did not fulfill in them *And afterwards they shall go out with great wealth.*' (Genesis 15:14)

They (Bnei Yisrael) said, 'If we would only go out with our persons!' This may be compared to a man who is locked in prison and people say to him, 'Tomorrow they will release you from prison and give you much money.' He says to them, 'Please get me out immediately. I do not ask for any more.'" (Talmud Berachot 9a)

The divine intention of the Jews leaving with great wealth was to uplift the spirit of the people, which as a result of years of slavery, had been humbled and no longer set its sights on great goals. Therefore it was appropriate to accustom the soul to want great material things, so that eventually it would come to want great spiritual attainments as well. Now in order to bring out the point that the end goal was not to aspire to the love of silver and gold, the thought was not communicated in the usual form of a command, but rather as a request. Their downtrodden spirit would be uplifted by seeing themselves bearing wealth, while on the other hand they would know that this is not the end, but rather the means to an end. If it were truly an end, it would have been expressed as a command, but instead, this was a request.

The reason Avraham would make this remark is because his entire purpose in life was to establish a nation aware of G-d, who would proclaim His great name in the world, just as he, Avraham, had while he lived. To influence many nations, there is required greatness of soul, but also the aspiration to material wealth, for it is through trade that peoples come close to and learn from one another. Thus through Israel's pursuit of wealth --- provided the trading is fair and just --- there results the desired goal of G-d's light shining into the world. If Israel would have trained their sights on humbler goals; if they had been satisfied being shepherds and farmers, who do not interact with the global market, then how would the light of G-d spread through the world? So Avraham, with his higher agenda, requests that his descendants, after having undergone the lesson in humility provided by the "smeltery" of Egypt --- become accustomed to the global social interaction that will come about as a result of their desire to accumulate wealth.

The comparison above is most apt. Israel are compared to prisoners incapable of imagining a fortune greater than their release from prison, so they had to be goaded to ask for more.

'Ein A'yah, Volume 1, p.44 (commentary on *Ein Yaakov*, Yaakov ben Shlomo ibn Habib, published 1516, Greece, the *Aggadic* sections of the Talmud, the ethical and inspirational teachings of the Talmud).