

Story Pesach 5785

לכבוד פסח, I'd like to share a story that I've been telling for many years at our סדרים. The משפחה is familiar with it - we all love this story. It's inspiring, interesting, and connects to the אמרי יוסף of Spinka. In fact, the Spinka Rebbe himself would tell this story every year at his סדר on the second night of פסח.

It is a מעשה about an אברך, a young man who had just finished his סדר on the second night of פסח. He sang שיר השירים, reviewed all the stories he knew about יציאת מצרים, and, as incredible as it may sound, he was not tired. He simply could not fall asleep. He said to himself, "I don't want to go to sleep. What should I do? Tonight is the second night of פסח, the night that אסתר made her סעודה. Let me read מגילת אסתר." And so, as hard to believe as it is, he began reading מגילת אסתר.

As he was finishing, he suddenly saw an apparition - a נשמה hovering over him. It was a frightening sight. The נשמה began to speak and said, "I need your help." The young man, startled, responded, "What do I have to do with you? What do you have to do with me? And what do you want from me now?" The נשמה then began to tell its story.

There are נשמות that, after their דין וחשבון following 120 years, and even after passing all the tests, still do not have enough זכויות to enter גן עדן. These נשמות need an additional זכות, something specific, to gain entry. Every year, during קריאת מגילה, when מגילת אסתר is being read throughout the entire world, these נשמות rely on the זכות of קריאת מגילה to enter גן עדן. But, as one can imagine, there are many נשמות - [he doesn't specify how many] - who are all struggling to get through the small entrance to גן עדן. There is a rush, a tremendous influx of נשמות trying to enter during this brief window of time.

"This year," the נשמה continued, "I was pushing and pushing, trying to get in. I reached the door - only to have it slammed shut in my face. I said to myself, 'I am not moving from here until next year, when קריאת מגילה happens again. I am staying right here. I am not going anywhere.' And then, suddenly, I heard it - I heard someone leining the מגילה. My heart pounded. I rushed to the door and started banging. 'Let me in!' I cried. The gatekeeper asked, 'What do you want?' I told him, 'They're reading מגילה!' He responded, 'So what? It's not פורים now.' 'True,' I admitted, 'but they are reading מגילה! Let me in! You must let me in!' The gatekeeper said, 'I will consult with my superiors, the מעלה של בית דין.' He left, and when he returned, he told me, 'Yes, קריאת מגילה grants entry - but this is not the right time. Therefore, the only way this will work is if you go down and ask the person who is reading the מגילה if he agrees that you should be allowed in. If he grants permission, the doors will be opened for you.'"

And that was the end of the story. The Spinka Rebbe never revealed what happened next. Did the אברך grant permission? Did the נשמה enter גן עדן? We do not know.

The חסידים who were close to the Spinka Rebbe knew him to be extremely meticulous when telling stories. He never shared a מעשה unless he had verified its authenticity. They believed that this young man in the story was, in fact, the Spinka Rebbe himself. But that was merely their supposition.

Regardless, it is a powerful story that demonstrates the impact of what we do in this world - the power of our actions, our מצות, and how even something seemingly small can have enormous consequences in שמים.

Have a wonderful סדר, and a wonderful יום טוב.

