

In honor of the **יום טוב** of **פסח**, we will talk a little bit about one of the highlights of the highlights. One of the highlights of **פסח**, not the only highlight, but one of the highlights, is of course, the **סדר**. And one of the highlights of the **סדר**, not the only highlight, but one of them, is the **פיר קושיות**. We have all the little kids line up, and they get up, so proud that they know how to say the **פיר קושיות**, and they all ask the **פיר קושיות**. And then it's our job, now that we've all grown up, to give them the answer. And the answer is contained through the entire **הגדה** of the **סדר**, but it starts with **עֲבָדִים הָיינו לַפְרָעָה בְּמִצְרַיִם**. That paragraph ends with the famous words: **הָרִי אֲנוּ וּבְנֵינוּ וּבְנֵי בְנֵינוּ מְשַׁעְבָּדִים הָיינו לַפְרָעָה בְּמִצְרַיִם וְאַפִּילוּ בָּלָנוּ חֻמְמִים בָּלָנוּ גְבוּנִים בָּלָנוּ זָקְנִים בָּלָנוּ**. There is a fascinating **שאלה** which I came across in my studies, and that question is, what is the difference between a **חכם** and a **נבון**? **חכם** means a wise man, and **נבון** is usually translated as a discerning man. It says **וְאַפִּילוּ בָּלָנוּ חֻמְמִים בָּלָנוּ גְבוּנִים**. What is the difference? So it's brought down in the **ספר חיים שיש בהם**, in the name of a **רב יוסף** of Bagdad, who's **ספר** was called, **עוד יוסף חיים**, appropriately enough. He brings down a fascinating **מעשה**, which emphasizes and highlights the difference between a **חכם** and a **נבון**.

One day, a king was going to go for a walk, and he had along with him, **אייבשיץ זכותו יגן עלינו**, a **רב** of a tremendous number of **ספרים**, a well-known genius, and the king asked him a question. "You Jews say that a **חכם** is greater than a **נביא**. Tell me, I am going out for a walk now - when I return, which entrance will I use to reenter the city? The larger entrance or the smaller entrance?" **רב יונתן** replied, "If I tell you, my master the king, that you will return through one entrance, you will surely try to outsmart me and use the other. So here is what I will do: I will write my answer on a piece of paper, seal it in an envelope, and after my master the king returns from his walk and is seated back on his throne, he may break the seal and read my answer." The king liked the idea and agreed. He took the sealed envelope, placed it in his pocket, and went on his walk. As he was on his way back, he thought to himself, "I will not return through the usual large entrance; I will go through the small entrance instead." But as he approached the small entrance, he reconsidered, "Surely, **רב יונתן** predicted that I would avoid the usual entrance, so he must have written that I will come through the small entrance. Therefore, I will go through the large entrance." When he arrived at the large entrance, he again hesitated, "No, that clever Jew must have foreseen this as well!" He went back and forth, unable to decide, completely confused between the two options. Finally, the king had a brilliant idea. He turned to his attendants and ordered, "Break a hole in the wall and make a new entrance! I will not use either of the regular entrances - I will make a third way!" And so they did. The king returned through the new entrance that had just been created. When he got back, he pulled the envelope from his pocket, broke the seal, and inside was written a single line from the **משנה** in **בבלי**: **לְעֹשֶׂה לֹא דָרָךְ: סְנֵה דְרִין (ב'ד')**. A king has the right to break through a wall to make his own entrance! The king was astounded. "How did you know?" he asked **רב יונתן**. **רב יונתן** replied, "The **חכמים** say that a **חכם** is greater than a **נביא**. I considered all the possibilities, I analyzed every thought process that might run through the king's mind, and I realized exactly what would happen. As the **חכמים** teach **ל"ב ע"א** (תמיד ל"ב ע"א): **אֵיזְהוּ חָכָם? הָרוּאָה אֶת הַנוֹלָד: (תמיד ל"ב ע"א)**. [Which in this case was also a play on words - he foresaw something new being created.] A **חכם** has the ability to see the future unfold through deep understanding and analysis."

The **חכם** from Bagdad, **הגאון רבי יוסף חיים**, explains: What is **חכמה**? It is the ability to see all the possibilities, all the contingencies that can lead to a conclusion. What is **בינה**? It is the ability to take all that wisdom and correctly determine the proper solution - exactly as **רב יונתן אייבשיץ** did.

May we be **זוכה**, as we go through the **הגדה**, to understand all the **סברות**, to learn all the **תורות**, and to arrive at the **אמונה** - the true faith - that the **הגדה** seeks to instill within us, so that we may, in turn, teach it to our children. The **אמונה שלמה** in **הקדוש ברוך הוא** - not only that He is the **בורא עולם**, but that He is the **מנהיג העולם**. That is the essence of the story of **פסח**: **הקדוש ברוך הוא** is running the world - for them, for us, and for all **דורות**, **אמן**, **Good Yom Tov!**

