

Dayenu: Would it have been enough?

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Source:

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Passover is about miracles. God does not often enact chains of miracles, so the song “Dayenu” highlights how much God really did for us. The song’s refrain states that each miracle would have been enough for the Israelites. While any one of these miracles alone aided us extraordinarily, none of them were done needlessly. The School of David and the School of Noah gather to discuss God’s miracles and the ideas behind Dayenu: Would only some, or even one, of God’s miracles really have been enough?

The School of David opens by saying: If God brought us out of Egypt but didn’t stop the Egyptians, would it really have been enough? If He never split the sea, would it have been enough? If He never gave us the Torah, would it have been enough? We left Egypt, and then without God, we would have been lost. Without God, we would have been nothing. The Egyptians would have caught us before we reached Israel. We would have been stuck at the sea, and forced to turn back around. We wouldn’t have been given the Torah at Mount Sinai, and therefore we wouldn’t be the religion we are today. The sages of the School of David wouldn’t be writing this piece right now if God stopped after the first step and said “that was enough, you are welcome.” So, the School of David says no, it would not have been enough. God did everything for a reason, and with anything less, the Jews wouldn’t be around to tell their story.

The School of Noah responds: Respectfully, I disagree. The amount of miracles that God provided for the Jewish people is immeasurable. Even one of the miracles that God performed for the Jews would have been enough, because it was a *miracle*. We must be thankful for what God did for us, and that he freed us from Egypt. We are humans, and we would have made do with what we were given. To answer your question: would it have been enough? In some cases, I answer - yes. In some cases though, it would not have been enough.

The School of David says: Alright, we are finally getting somewhere. I agree that certain miracles would have been enough. For example, God didn’t have to execute the Egyptian gods, or give us the Egyptian riches. It would have been enough without these. The School of David can agree with this. However, I am sticking with my firm belief that just one of these miracles would not have been sufficient. Many of these miracles were necessary for the survival of the Jewish people, for example the giving of the Torah and the splitting of the sea. I see where you’re going with this, but still stick with my belief.

The School of Noah responds to this with an idea of narrative expansion. Many many years after the Exodus, the Jews sat in their homeland - Israel, and everything was tranquil and peaceful. They began to think about how lucky they were to be free, and live in Israel at that moment. That led them to thinking: what if God had never freed them from slavery. And as they remembered the story of their ancestors they began to realize how many miracles God actually provided them with as they left Egypt. They became so thankful for all of the miracles provided and began to create the song Dayenu based off of their thankfulness, as it is written: “If God had only performed one miracle it would have been enough.” In the end they realized, even if God had not performed all of these miracles, they still would have made do. They would have made do because that was our chance of survival. Applying this attitude to our everyday life will allow us to really be thankful for what we have.

Overall, many ideas were discussed and no conclusions were made. One idea that both the School of David

and the School of Noah alluded to is the variation in miracles: some would not have been enough and some would have been enough. Does this mean that some miracles were smaller than others? Possibly. It might also mean that not all miracles were as important as each other. Both schools agreed that not all miracles were necessary. Some combinations of the miracles would have been enough. However, undoubtedly, each of these miracles was important, for otherwise, God would not have made them happen. We have our own perspective on the miracles which is different from God's perspective, and we cannot know God's reasons. The best we can do is be grateful for every miracle, small or large.