

It Would Have Been Enough

Rabbi Aaron Starr

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Yesterday Rebecca turned me and said, “You know, we are really blessed.”

That in and of itself is not unique. In fact, quite frequently she and I have that conversation. What made the comment unique is what followed her statement acknowledging that we are “really blessed.”

She explained,

- Had we simply come through a year of pandemic with our health intact: *Dayeinu*.
- Had we come through this year healthy and with a roof over our heads and food in our stomachs: *Dayeinu*.
- Had we simply come through this last year healthy, with a roof over our heads and food in our stomachs, and celebrating our oldest becoming bar mitzvah: *Dayeinu*.
- Had we come through this year healthy with a roof over our heads and food in our stomachs, in celebration of the bar mitzvah, and surrounded by an amazing synagogue family committed to God, Torah, and the Jewish People: *Dayeinu*.

Our conversation went on like that. *Dayeinu*: It would have been enough.

That is not of course to ignore the challenges, the losses, the difficult moments, the fears, and the ups-and-downs of a year of life let alone a year of pandemic life. Rather, in proclaiming *Dayeinu*, we are declaring that we choose to focus on the positive; that we choose to focus on the people, the experiences, the community, the choices, and the material possessions that fill our hearts with hope and love. We choose too the awareness that there are countless others who would gladly trade places with us.

So, *Dayeinu*.

We Jews are a demanding people and we American Jews even more so. But once-a-year we look to each other and proclaim, *Dayeinu*. That one word that we recite repeatedly on Passover is a tremendous statement of humility and gratitude.

The list of traditional *Dayeinus* is in fact quite long, as we recite the countless blessings that God performed for our ancestors in the days of old. From freeing us from slavery to giving us the Torah to giving us Shabbat to restoring for us the Promised Land and more: *Dayeinu*. We would have been quite content with any one of those – okay, maybe a couple of those – but as a people we are indeed, over and over again, blessed. We have much for which to be grateful.

We prepare now again to celebrate a pandemic *Pesach*. For some of us, more friends or family will surround our tables. For others, we will note empty chairs that once filled by souls who made our lives richer. Either way, let us remember to take note of how much we ourselves are indeed blessed. Let us recount all the *Dayeinus* for which we are humbly, truly, and profoundly grateful.

Then, after recounting our own list of blessings, let us remember to find a way to go out and shower others (and especially those in need) with blessing as well. Let us remember too that we can continue to recite *Dayeinu* throughout the year as well.

Rebecca, Caleb and Ayal join me in wishing you Shabbat shalom and *chag kasher v'sameach*: a joyful and Kosher Passover celebration.