

ניצוצי אור Sparks of Light

בס"ד



No. 27

פסח תשע"ה

Pesach

Rabbi Shimon Hellinger, Editor

The Kedusha of Pesach

Recalling his *erev Pesach* experiences in the home of his father, the **Rebbe Rashab**, the *Friediker Rebbe* wrote: "On *erev Pesach*, my father would wake up no later than three in the morning and daven no later than five-thirty. Afterwards, until the time of *biur chometz*, he was occupied with removing the *chometz* and the *chometz'dike* utensils from the house. At *chatzos*, midday, preparations for *matzos mitzva* began and my father would study the *Seder Korban Pesach*. From that time onward, a *ruchniyus'dike* light shone in our home, filling everyone with *simcha*. During the remaining hours, until *Yom-Tov* began, my father would discuss the meaning of the *Korban Pesach* in *Kabbala* and *Chassidus*, and its practical application in our *avoda*."

"The time between reading the *Seder Korban Pesach* and the beginning of *Yom-Tov* was not considered a mere preparation for *Yom-Tov*. That time was itself considered to be a *Yom-Tov*. It was permeated with an inner joy, a certainty and an expectation that at any moment we would have *Moshiach*, the *Beis HaMikdash* and the *Korban Pesach*! In this elevated mood we would go off to daven *Maariv*. The *shul* was always packed with *Yidden* with shining faces, dressed in clean, fresh clothing despite the hard work they had been doing to prepare for *Pesach*. No one spoke. Everyone waited eagerly for the joyous *Shir HaMaalos* that would signify the beginning of *Maariv*. An especially delightful *simcha'dike* melody filled the *shul* as the *mispaelim* sang *Hallel*, their voices gradually intensifying. And that holy *tefilla* climaxed in an *ahavas-Yisroel'dike* 'Gut-Yom-Tov!'"

(לקוטי דיבורים ח"א ע' 270)

When introducing *Mah Nishtana*, the *Haggada* says: *Kan haben shoel*. Simply translated, this means: "At this point, the son asks [the Four Questions]." However, *shoel* means not only "asks" but also "requests." So once at the *Seder*, when the *tzaddik Reb Osher of Stolin* came to those words, he told those present, "Now is the time for every *Yid* to ask HaShem for whatever he needs."

(בית אהרן)

The **Rashab of Lubavitch** once told his son the **Rayatz**, "Yosef Yitzchok, during the *Seder*, and especially when opening the door for *Eliyahu HaNavi*, one should think about being a *mentch*, and HaShem will give His help. Don't ask for *gashmiyus*, only for *ruchniyus*."

(שיחות ח"ה"פ תש"ב)

The Seder

The **Maharil** writes that one should be filled with awe as he fulfills every particular instruction that the *Chachomim* ordained for the *Seder*. Even if a certain observance may seem to be unimportant, one should realize that every detail has significance. As the **Shaloh** writes, "All the *mitzvos* of the *Seder* have lofty reasons, both revealed and hidden. It is a *mitzva* to discuss them and to try to understand them."

(הגש"פ עם לקוטי טעמים ומנהגים ע' ה, של"ה)

The **Shaloh** writes, "The *Seder* night and all its *halachos* are filled with *kedusha*, for at this time HaShem chose us from the nations and gave us His *mitzvos*. On this night one should refrain from engaging in mundane chatter so as not to be separated from HaShem even for a moment. And by telling the story of *yetzias Mitzrayim*, we arouse the power of *geulah*."

The **Baal HaTanya** once said that the *matza* that we eat on the first night of *Pesach* fortifies our *emuna*, and the *matza* of the Second *Seder* brings health, both *begashmiyus* and *beruchniyus*.

(של"ה, סה"ש תש"ב ע' 94)

While reciting the *Haggada*, the *tzaddik Reb Levi Yitzchok of Berdichev* was filled with tremendous *hislahavus*. When he reached the words *Matzah zu* he would become so carried away in *dveikus* that he would fall from his chair to the floor, overturning the *kaira*, the *matzos* and the wine. By the time he came to, the table would be set afresh, and another long white *kittel* was handed to him to replace the one stained with wine. Putting it on, he would say with visible delight, "Ah! *Matzah zu*..."

(סיפורי חסידים זוין, מועדים, ע' 367)

After the *histalkus* of the holy *tzaddik, Reb Menachem Mendel of Vorki*, many of his *chassidim* accepted the *tzaddik Reb Beirish of Biala* as Rebbe. On the first night of *Pesach*, they brought him a costly gift – a silver *kos shel Eliyahu* that held an entire bottleful of wine. The *tzaddik* decided that he would use this goblet for the *arba kosos*, in order to perform the *mitzva behiddur*. Since he made a point of drinking each cup entirely, at that *Seder* he drank four bottles of wine... yet this was not at all apparent!

After conducting the *Seder* with fiery *hislahavus* until the early morning hours, the *tzaddik* rested for fifteen minutes and then went straight to *shul*, davening until four in the afternoon. He then had the *seuda* and went to prepare for davening. At the Second *Seder* he again drank four bottles of wine, and once again the *Seder* extended through the night. The following morning, the Rebbe went immediately to daven, finishing late in the afternoon.

(באהלי צדיקים ע' שו)

Reciting the Haggada

The **Zohar** writes that whoever retells the story of *yetzias Mitzrayim* and celebrates it joyfully will be privileged to rejoice with the *Shechina* in *Olam HaBa*. The **AriZal** taught that the *Haggada* should be recited aloud, with great *simcha* and focused *kavana*.

(רעיא מהימנא פ' בא מ ע"ב, סידור האריז"ל קודם מה נשתנה)

Consider This

Why should we rejoice at the *seuder*?

Sparks of Greatness

Reb Aharon of Karlin - יט ניסן

Reb Aharon Hagadol of Karlin was of the great talmidim of the *Maggid* of Mezritch. While his Rebbe was still alive, he established a center in Karlin for the spreading of *Chassidus*. Reb Aharon was known for his tremendous ecstasy in davening and the holiness he would experience on Shabbos. He used travel around influencing many people to become *baalei teshuvah*. He was *niftar* at age 36 on the 19th Nissan 1772 (תקל"ב).

When he returned home from learning by the Mezritcher *Maggid*, Reb Aharon was asked what he had learned there. "Nothing," was his reply. "What does that mean?" they wondered. Reb Aharon answered, "Simply, as I said. I learned that I am nothing."

One Erev Shabbos, the Mezritcher *Maggid*

went to rest. Meanwhile, the *talmidim* returned to their lodgings and Reb Aharon of Karlin began reciting "*Shir Hashirim*", as he would on every Erev Shabbos. Suddenly, the attendant of the *Maggid* came into the *shul* and asked for Reb Aharon. When he found him, the *shamash* asked, in the name of the *Maggid*, that he stop saying *Shir Hashirim* for his recital makes a great commotion above, and it is not letting the *Maggid* sleep.

The esteemed *chossid* and rof Reb Hillel Paritcher would add that from here we can get a glimpse to just how great the *Maggid* was. Despite great commotion was caused above by Reb Aharon's *Shir Hashirim*, the *Maggid*'s sleep was an even greater level accomplishment!

Library Sparks

The central theme of Passover is freedom--the liberation of the Children of Israel from the Egyptian oppressors. The celebration of this freedom is of such importance in Judaism, that we are required to relive the Exodus from Egypt every single day: "In every generation a person should consider himself as if he himself went out of Egypt."

But, exactly what type of freedom were the Jews granted when they left Egypt? Did we not remove the yoke of Pharaoh only to replace it with an even greater yoke? "When you take the people out from Egypt they shall serve G-d," Moses is told. G-d took the entire Jewish People out of slavery in Egypt, only on condition that they become subservient to Him! Observing the Torah and its 613 commandments is certainly a heavy yoke. Is it not a contradiction to claim that the Jews were freed from bondage, if they afterward found themselves in a new sort of servitude?

The concept of freedom is relative, dependent on many factors. That which constitutes freedom for a plant is quite different from the freedom demanded by an animal or a human being. A tree requires good soil, abundant rain, air and sunshine to thrive. But those same conditions would present the very opposite of a free existence for an animal, which is not rooted to the ground and must enjoy freedom of movement, in addition to sufficient food and water.

Moving up the ladder of creation we see that

the same freedom that suffices for an animal does not constitute freedom for a human being. If we were to fulfill all a person's physical needs, yet not allow his intellect to be satisfied, this would be a terrible deprivation. Freedom for man includes the recognition that he possesses a need to fulfill his intellectual yearnings, to develop his full potential as a human being.

And yet, even intellectual fulfillment is not true freedom for a Jew. His Jewish soul must also be taken into consideration, that "veritable piece of G-d" which is the birthright of every member of the Jewish nation. Even when this soul is clothed in a physical body it maintains its intimate connection with its G-dly source. A Jew can only find true freedom and fulfillment when his soul is afforded the opportunity to strengthen that bond with G-d, through the Torah and its commandments.

That is why our Sages said, "A truly liberated person is one who engages in the study of Torah." Torah for the Jew is as essential to his existence as water is to a fish. Contrary to being a yoke, Torah is our very life. Just as a fish can live only in water, the Torah is the Jew's only appropriate medium.

Freedom, therefore, is that which will enable every single organism in the world to live up to its full potential. For a Jew, whose soul is his true essence, genuine freedom is that which will allow him to draw closer and closer to G-d--learning Torah and performing mitzvos.

Halacha Sparks

Writing Electronically on Chol Hamoed

Rabbi Chaim Chazan

I'm aware that certain forms of writing are prohibited on chol hamoed. Is it permitted to type on electronic devices, such as to send a text message or to compose an email?

There are different categories of writing which have different halachos: (A) *Maaseh Uman* which includes Hebrew blocked lettering, or writing that requires special attention, such as calligraphy. The *halacha* is that such writing is permitted only in a situation where refraining from writing will cause a substantial loss (*davar ha'aveid*), or where it will benefit the public on *chol hamoed*. (B) *Maaseh Hedyot* includes Hebrew cursive script. If it is for the sake of *chol hamoed* or for the sake of the public it is permitted to write normally, however the custom is to make a small change in the manner of writing (*shinui*). The *din* regarding Latin letters is subject to dispute among *poskim*.

Writing on an electronic screen is not considered writing. It is therefore permissible to type on a computer on *chol hamoed*.

However, complicated computer work is prohibited as a form of *Meleches Uman* -- work generally done by a skilled craftsman, which is prohibited on *chol hamoed*.

Printing out from a computer however, according to many *poskim* poses a problem on and should therefore be avoided even for the sake of *chol hamoed*, unless it is a situation of financial loss or public need. Among the halachic issues involved in printing is an unresolved debate among *poskim* whether *Maaseh Uman* is determined by the act or by the result of the act. The computer command to print is not a *Maaseh Uman*, but the printed pages are surely a work that would require skill for a person to produce. Therefore it should be avoided if possible.

שו"ע ריש סי' תקמ"ה ונו"כ, שו"ת שבט הקהתי ח"א סי' קסח, חול המועד כהלכתו פרק ו' סעיף צח ובהערות שם.

Come visit our library at 1709 Avenue J, Brooklyn NY. Call us at 718-677-9000. www.thebaalshemtovlibrary.com. tbstlibrary@gmail.com

Library hours: Sunday : 1:30 pm - 9:30 pm. Monday - Thursday: 2:00 pm - 10:30 pm. Special Women's Hours: Sunday 1:30 pm - 5:30 pm.

Our new exciting shiurim program will be operating soon! Shiurim will be taking place weekly at our state of the of the art library for men. Lectures will be taking place for women as well on a variety interesting & important topics.