

THE AVODA OF PESACH

93

לימוד הדבר תורה לזכות ר' שלום מרדכי הלוי שני בן רבקה לגאולה קרובה מן המיצר אל המרחב

THE KEDUSHA OF PESACH

The Frierdiker Rebbe described his Erev Pesach experiences in the home of his father, the Rebbe Rashab. "On Erev Pesach, father would wake up no later than three in the morning and daven no later than five thirty. Afterwards, until the time of *b'ur chametz*, he was occupied with removing the chometz and the *chometz'dike* utensils from the house. At chatzos, preparations for matzos mitzvah would begin and my father would learn the, 'Seder Korbon Pesach'. From that time onward, a *ruchnius'dike* light would shine in our home, filling everyone with simcha. During the remaining hours, until Yom Tov began, my father would discuss the meaning of the korbon pesach in kabbala and Chassidus, and the practical application for our avoda.

"The time between saying the, 'seder korbon pesach,' and the start of yom tov was not considered preparation for yom tov. That time was considered to be a yom tov itself, permeated with an inner joy, a certainty and expectation that at any moment we would have moshiach, the Beis Hamikdosh and the korbon pesach! In this elevated mood we would go 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 for the joyous, 'shir hamalos,' which would signify the beginning of maariv. An especially delightful *simcha'dike* tune filled the shul as everyone sang hallel, the voices of the mispalelim gradually intensifying. The holy tefilla was concluded with an *ahavas yisroel'dike*, 'Gut yom tov!'"

(לקוטי דיבורים ח"א ע' 270)

In the year תרנ"א, when the Frierdiker Rebbe was ten years old, the Rebbe Rashab told him, "Erev Pesach is a yom tov, for that is when the Yidden would bring the korbon pesach. The time for bringing the korbon is in the afternoon so we say the 'Seder Korbon Pesach,' after mincha. I will teach you its meaning so that you understand it. Then you should review it, and after mincha we will recite it together."

When saying the, "Seder Korbon Pesach," the Rebbe Rashab dressed in his yom tov clothing, with his yom tov hat and a gartel. He would stand facing south, with a shining face and say every word carefully, discussing its halochos. From the year תרנ"ו, the Rebbe began explaining some parts according to chassidus, and from תרס"ח, he added an explanation according to kabbala.

(לקוטי דיבורים ח"ד ע' תרפד)

The Rebbe Rashab once told the Frierdiker Rebbe, "Yosef Yitzchok, during the seder, and especially when opening the door for Eliyahu Hanavi, one must think about being a mentsch and Hashem will help. Don't ask for gashmius, only for ruchnius."

(שיחות חה"פ תש"ב)

When coming to the words, '*kan haben sho'el*' - here the son asks (the Mah Nishtana), the tzaddik Reb Osher of Stoln once said, "Now is the time for every Yid to ask Hashem for anything he needs."

(בית אהרן)

THE SEDER

The Maharil writes that every person must be filled with fear in fulfilling every detail that the chachomim have established for the seder. Even if something may seem to be unimportant, one should realize that every detail has meaning. The Shaloh writes, "All the mitzvos of the seder have lofty reasons, both revealed and hidden. It is a mitzvah to discuss them and to try to understand them."

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

When he was eight years old, the Frierdiker Rebbe recorded in his diary the events of the previous Pesach. "Erev Pesach, after learning the, 'Seder Korbon Pesach,' with me, my father said, 'Tonight, Eliyahu Hanavi is coming to all the Yiddishe homes, and the great tzaddikim will merit seeing him. Although in shamayim all neshamos are able to see everything, when they are placed in a body, they only feel things. 'Mishna' has the same letters as 'neshama'. Begin reviewing the mishnayos of *mesechta Pesachim* eight times, and when you will come with me to open the door for Eliyahu Hanavi, you should review the *mesechta* a ninth time..."

(ספר המאמרים תשי"א ע' 296)

The entire Pesach, including the sedarim, was joyously celebrated in Tomchei Temimim with almost all of the talmidim staying to hear chassidus from the Rebbe Rashab instead of traveling home.

For all the seudos a large room was set up with many tables, and a director and an assistant were chosen to take care of all the necessary yom tov preparations for the hundred and fifty talmidim. At the sedarim, one person at each table was appointed as mashgiach (overseer) to be responsible for the needs of that table. One talmid was chosen to be the announcer, and he would

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sell the zechus of asking the Mah Nishtana, filling up Kos Shel Eliyahu, opening the door for Eliyahu, and leading the bentching. According to the announcer's instructions, one table would start Kadesh, and when they concluded the next table was instructed to begin, each table taking their turn. Urchatz was done in the same organized fashion.

In the center of the room was a table, with a handcrafted menorah of the Rebbe Maharash, around which the talmidim danced during the seuda. The seder continued into the early morning hours.

(רשימות דברים ח"א ע' של"א)

The Shaloh writes, "The Seder night and all its halachos are filled with kedusha, for this is when 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. By telling the story of yetzias mitzrayim, we arouse the power of geulah."

The Alter Rebbe said that the matza which we eat on the first night of Pesach strengthens our emunah, and the matzah of the second seder brings health, both b'gashmius and b'ruchnius.

(של"ה, סה"ש תש"ב ע' 94)

While reciting passages from the Haggadah, the tzaddik Reb Levi Yitzchok of Berdichev was filled with excitement and tremendous hislahavus. Reaching the words '*Matzah zu*,' he would become so caught up in dveikus that he would fall from his chair to the floor, overturning the kairah, matzos and 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 Berish of Biala as Rebbe. On the first night of Pesach, they brought him an expensive gift, a large silver Kos Shel Eliyahu which was able to hold the amount of an entire bottle of wine. The tzaddik decided that he would use this cup for the arba kosos in order to perform hiddur mitzvah. Since he was careful to drink each cup entirely, at that seder he drank four bottles of wine... yet, this was not apparent at all!

The seder was conducted with fiery hislahavus until the early morning hours, after which 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 maariv. The time for the second seder arrived, and as he had done the night before, the Rebbe drank four bottles of wine, and once again the seder extended throughout the night. The following morning, the Rebbe went immediately to daven, finishing late in the afternoon.

(באהלי צדיקים ע' שנ)

RECITING THE HAGGADAH

The Zohar writes that whoever retells the story of yetzias mitzrayim and celebrates it joyfully will merit being joyous with the Shechinah in Olam Haba. The Arizal said that the Haggada should be recited loudly, with great simcha and proper kavana.

The meshamesh Reb Nachman Maryashin related that when he was once at the seder of the Rebbe Maharash, and all were sitting with awe and *derech erez* saying the Haggadah quietly, the Rebbe instructed that the Haggadah be recited loudly.

The Frierdiker Rebbe also read the Haggadah in a loud voice, and when he became physically unable to do so, he asked others to say it aloud. The Rebbe as well would motion to the one reading the Haggadah to read it out loud. During Hallel, the Rebbe would read aloud with a sweet tune and a noticeable dveikus, tears flowing from his eyes.

(אוצר מנהגי חב"ד ע' קנד, קצח)

One year, upon arriving home from shul on the first night of Pesach, the Shpoler Zeida's son announced in the customary niggun, "*Kadesh: Ven der tatte kumt aheim fun shul macht er bald kiddush*" (Kadesh: When father comes home from shul on Pesach, he recites Kiddush right away). The Shpoler Zeide asked him why, but the boy replied that this was all his melamed had taught him. The Shpoler Zeide then told him the explanation that needs to be added, "*kdei di kinder zollen nit ainshloffen un freggen di Mah Nishtana*" (so that the children will not fall asleep and will ask the four questions)."

At the Yom Tov seuda the next day, the Shpoler Zeide asked his son's melamed why he had not taught the reason for Kadesh, as this has been the minhag since the distant past. "I didn't think it was necessary to teach this to small children, especially since this reason isn't so important, for making Kiddush early applies to everyone, even if there are no small children at home." The Shpoler Zeide strongly protested, "How dare you say that this reason is unimportant? Are you wiser than the *melamdin* of previous generations? You simply don't begin to understand why they taught in this way. Don't ever change their minhagim according to what you consider logical!"

The Shpoler Zeide then went on to explain that the words contain great secrets: "On the night of the seder, our Father, Hashem, comes home from shul where he has seen that although the Yidden are exhausted from the laborious preparations for Pesach, they have nevertheless come to daven, and sing Hallel to Hashem with their whole hearts. Seeing this, Hashem has to 'recite kiddush right away', to renew his kiddushin with his kallah and take the Yidden out of golus. He must do this without delay. Why?"

"So that his little children, the Yidden, will not fall asleep in golus and despair of ever being redeemed. So 'they will be able to ask the Mah Nishtana', why is this night, this long golus, different from all other nights? It is being prolonged more than any other golus that we have endured!" With these words, the Shpoler Zeide broke out in tears and lifted his hands, crying out, "Hashem! Redeem us from golus while our hearts are still awake, and do not let us fall into a deep slumber!"

All present were roused with feelings of teshuvah, and some even fell to the floor, quietly sobbing. But their Rebbe soon revitalized them, "It is time to gladden our Father and show him that his young son can dance even in the 'dark!'" The tzaddik directed his chassidim to begin a lebedike niggun, and together they danced with great simcha.

(סיפורי חסידים זוין מועדים, ע' 361)