

To My Brethren Everywhere
G-d bless you all,

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Sholom u'Brocho:

The festival of Passover is approaching.

Everything in this world, on reflection, can serve us as useful instruction in our daily behavior, either in our relationship to G-d, or to fellow man, or both.

The Torah, "Torath Chayim", as the name implies ("Instruction in Life"), and its Mitzvoh, are particularly a source of instruction in good living. Still more so are our festivals, since their purpose is not only to inspire us during the period of celebration, but their influence is to be felt in our daily life all year round. First and foremost among them is the festival of Passover.

The remembrance of the Departure from Egypt is one of the main pillars of our Torah and faith. The event of the Exodus has been singled out for remembrance every day of the year, and on the night of Passover it is, of course, the very center of our attention.

Of the numerous lessons which this event has for us, I want to mention here but one point, a point which is significantly related to both the beginning and the end of the festival.

The first festive ceremony, after dark, is the "Seder". It begins with one of its basic features - the fulfillment of the precept, "Thou shalt relate it to thy son." The Seder ceremony contains changes and deviations from our customs and practices, with a view to rousing the interest of the children and make them participate in the service. Moreover, our duty to the children is not confined to the wise ones, but for "the wise, the wicked, the simple and the one who knows not what to ask". All of them must be gathered to the Seder, and each one must be instructed according to his intelligence and understanding.

The concluding event of the story of Passover is the miraculous Crossing of the Red Sea, when so great was G-d's revelation, that every one of the people of Israel could "point a finger" and exclaim, "This is my G-d, and I will glorify Him". The sons and daughters who were born at the height of the enslavement and oppression were those who recognized G-d first.

The end of the festival is 'rooted' in its beginning.

We must make every possible effort to find the ways and means (even at the sacrifice of personal habits and customs) to rouse the young generation and bring all Jewish boys and girls without exception - "the wise, wicked, simple and the one who knows not what to ask" - to Torah and Mitzvoh. Then we can confidently look to the Redemption and be sure that "With our youths and our aged shall we go, (together) with our sons and daughters."

Like that generation in Egypt, this generation, too, was born and bred in the most tragic period of our history. And as in those days of old, when G-d miraculously saved the children that they might later receive the Torah, so will He also save our generation, that the Torah may not be forgotten. He will save the remnants of our children also from those who rise up to destroy them, G-d forbid, through a distorted education which "calls - evil - good, and good - evil, and considers darkness-light, and light-darkness, despising the Torah of G-d". G-d will save us and them from their hands, that this generation be the generation of the Redemption, "not by might and not by power, but by the spirit of G-d", and every one, boy and girl, man and woman, will recognize G-d, "pointing a finger and saying, Behold your G-d, to whom we hoped to save us; this is the G-d to whom we hope; we shall rejoice and be glad in His salvation.

With the blessing of a kosher and
happy Pesach

M. Schneerson