

RABBI MENACHEM M. SCHNEERSON
Lubavitch
770 Eastern Parkway
Brooklyn 13, N. Y.
HYacinth 3-9250

מנחם מענדל שניאורסאהן
ליובאוויטש

770 איסטערן פארקווי
ברוקלין, נ. י.

FREE RENDITION

By the Grace of G-d
11th of Nissan, 5726
- 100th Anniversary Year
of the Histalkus-Hilulo
of the Rebbe the "Tzemach
Tzedek" -
Brooklyn, New York

To my brethern, Everywhere
G-d bless you all.

Greeting and Blessing:

The Festival of "Pesach" derives its name¹ from the Korban Pesach² - the Paschal Sacrifice, which was the prelude and condition³ of the liberation from Egypt. As such, the Korban Pesach serves as a meaningful expression of an essential and all-embracing event in Jewish life - an event which is also a concept, namely, Yetzias Mitzraim and Zman Heiruseinu, - total liberation⁴ from Mitzraim and attainment of Our Freedom. The Torah prescribes minutely the details which were to attend the Korban Pesach, how it was to be made ready, consecrated to G-d, and eaten.

I will dwell here on one of these details and its teachings for us, here and now.

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The Korban Pesach - a lamb⁵, which was held sacred and deified by the Egyptians - had to be reserved for a Korban by the eartswile Jewish slaves, to serve as a "Pesach unto G-d." After being killed (in the prescribed manner of Shechita) it had to be roasted whole on fire - "its head, feet and inwards together." (Ex. 12:9).

Everything connected with idolatry, from its highest aspects, as symbolized by the head, down to its lowest and most insignificant details, as symbolized by the feet, and even those things which maintain and "feed" the idolatry, as symbolized by the inwards (entails) - all these things must be abrogated and nullified. Instead "A Pesach unto G-d" is to be consecrated - "head, feet and inwards." All of which is to be roasted by the same fire.

This was to effectively symbolize the rejection of idolatry in all its totality, and in every detail. It is not enough to reject that which constitutes the "head" of the idolatry - its "wisdom" rationale and intellectual basis; it is equally necessary to negate its "feet" - the power which it claims to possess to trample upon everything and everyone, with all its means and methods.

The same is true of idolatry on a personal and individual level. Here, too, there could be an idolatry of "head" - if one makes one's limited human intellect the supreme authority, recognizing none higher; or, an idolatry of a lower order - the lust for power to trample and destroy under foot and boot the rights of others; or even making one's "inwards" - belly, one's livelihood - the highest aim in life.

In all the above instances and kinds of idolatry the same rule applies: a "little"⁹ idolatry is complete idolatry.

What is true of Yetzias Mitzraim (and liberation from the abominations of Mitzraim) is true of Zman Heiruseinu - our freedom and our concept of freedom, namely becoming "My servants"¹⁰ G-d's servants. It, too, must be total. The determination to be a Jew entails Mesirus-nefesh (self-sacrifice), which brooks no weighing¹¹ and choosing between that which is "down to earth" and that which

is in the realm of the head and intellect. Only then is it "Pesach unto G-d" - when "head, feet and inwards" - all of it and every part of it is imbued with the same fire, a fire that is thoroughly penetrating. 13

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In the preparatory days before Pesach this year, the 13th of Nissan marks the 100th anniversary of the Histalkus-Hilulo (demise) of the saintly Rebbe, the "Tzemach Tzedek." He represents perfection of the concept defined above, of consuming Mesirus-nefesh which permeates a Jew - "head, feet and inwards" - every day, all year round. In him were combined the highest qualities of Tzaddik, Gaon, Philosopher, Mekubal, Posek and Manhig Yisroel. Just as his Geonus penetrated every aspect of the Torah, Nigleh and Nistar - Pshat, Remez, Drush and Sod, so did his leadership, of the community and of the individual, embrace all spheres, economic and spiritual, from matters of vital concern for the Jewish people as a whole to "trivial" problems of the individual; from encouraging agricultural pursuits among Jews and obtaining the necessary concessions from the government, to providing a free loan to a single needy Jew; from safeguarding and strengthening Torah-education among Russian Jewry at large, to providing a melamed for a remote Jewish farmer's son.

All of this he carried out with a consuming Mesirus-nefesh, with all his heart and mind and with all his "possessions" - with the same devotion to the individual as to the community.

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To be sure, none of us can compare to the Rebbe the "Tzemach Tzedek". However, being a true Tzaddik and Manhig Yisroel, he possessed the capacity to illuminate and bestow of his qualities to each and everyone who is willing to follow in the path which he had trodden - just as the gigantic sun is reflected in a small drop of water, - illuminates it and makes it radiant, provided the drop is pure and clear and faces the sun.

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May G-d grant that the inspiration of the days of Pesach - fortified by the example of the Baal ha-Hilulo - should permeate every Jew and Jewess with the spirit of Yetzias Mitzraim and Zman Heiruseinu, to be liberated from all limitations and hindrances (Mitzraim - metzorim), both within and without, to be servants of G-d, to serve G-d in true and complete freedom.

Thereby hastening also the true and complete Redemption through our righteous Moshiach, that we may once again "partake of the offerings and Paschal sacrifices."

With blessing for a kosher and happy Pesach

Signed /Menachem Schneerson/

- (1) שמות לד, כה. וראה ת"י שם. (2) ע"ד השמות: חג המצות, השבועות, הסוכות. ובפרט לפי המכילתא (בא יב, כז) שע"י הקרבן פסח - פסח לה' על בתי בני"י. ואף שזמן קרבן הפסח הוא בערב פסח והלילה שאחריו - הרי גם חה"ש הוא ע"ש ז' שבועות שקדמו לו. (3) ראה מכילתא בא (יב, ו) (הובא בפרש"י שם) יב, כז. ובכ"מ.
- (4) כל הכתוב (בא יא, א) כלה גרש יגרש. וראה ברכות (ט, רע"ב) ונצלתם את מצרים כו'. ועד אשר ג"פ הוזהרו בני"י שלא לחזור למצרים (מכילתא בשלח יד, יג. סהמ"צ להרמב"ם מל"ת מו). ועיין ש' המצות להאריז"ל ס"פ ראה. (5) שמות רבה פט"ז, ג. ובזח"ג (רנא, א): דטלה. רב על כל ממנן דאלקים אחרים. (6) פסחים עד, א. וראה תוד"ה נחתך שם. רמב"ם הל' ק"פ פ"י הי"א. (7) ראה זח"ג (רנא, א): לבתר דיינין לי' בנורא דכתיב פסילי אלהיהם תשרפון באש. (8) להעיר מע"ז (מא, א): יד..רגל. ובפיה"מ שם: וכן צורת איזה אבר. (9) ראה ע"ז (עד, א) ובירוש' שם: ולא ידבק בידך מאומה. (10) להעיר משמו"ר (פ"ג, ה): עה"פ בהוציאך גו' באיזה זכות כו' תעבדון כו'. (11) להעיר מדין גרות (שהתחילה במצרים) שמודיעין אותו קלות וחמורות (יבמות מו, א. מז, א). (12) ראה ד"ה אני ישנה (בס' המאמרים תש"ס ע' קיט ואילך). (13) וכהציווי אל תאכלו ממנו נא. (14) ראה תורת חיים (לאדמו"ר האמצעי) ד"ה ויהיו ח"ש מאה שנה וביאורה"ז שם. אור התורה להצ"צ ד"ה זה. (15) ראה תניא רפמ"ב. פמ"ד. (16) אגה"ק סי' כ"ז וביאורו. עיי"ש. (17) ראה מכתב כ"ק מו"ח אדמו"ר בסוף קונטרס ב' ניסן תרח"ץ (ס' הקונטרסים ע' חד) שיחת אביו כ"ק אדמו"ר (מהורש"ב) ד"ה שמשא אכולא עלמא נייחא (סנה' לט, א) כו'. (18) להעיר מד"ה אנכי ה"א אשר הוצאתיך (ס' המאמרים לאדמו"ר מהר"ש - פסח תרכ"ו). (19) בברכת הגאולה (משנה פסחים קטז, ב. נוסח ההגדה).